

SIGHT & SOUND

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ARTICLES

Wanted—A Genius

I Hate the Films

Spanish A.B.C.

The Silver Lining

The Films Act

Zoo and You

Snow White & Fiery Red

Villains, Heroes and
Hobgoblins

Nigerian Nights

Death of Several Heroes

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BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE

FACTS

You should know about 'Kodachrome'

● Apart from unrivalled clarity and beauty of colour rendering, "Kodachrome" is outstanding among colour films for speed and latitude.

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To many individuals with ambition towards a really first class cine outfit, the prices asked for new models are beyond their means. It is to help such enthusiasts that R. G. Lewis (Cine) have taken steps to purchase as many cameras and projectors as possible and to overhaul them in their well equipped workshop before resale. The apparatus listed below is comprised of a variety of makes, some quite ancient, others not more than a few weeks old but all of them in perfect working order and guaranteed against mechanical and optical defects for a period of six months. Write now for further particulars of our services and terms.

16mm. PROJECTORS

16mm. Model "C" KODASCOPE, 100 watt, motor drive, speed control, 2" lens, complete with resistance for all voltages 100-250, A.C. or D.C. And case. £7 17s. 6d.

16mm. ENSIGN "100B", 2" Dallmeyer lens, speed control, complete with resistance for all voltages, 100-250 D.C. or A.C. £8 19s. 6d.

16mm. SIEMENS STANDARD, Bronze model, made throughout of specially hardened metal for commercial purposes, 250 watt lamp but equal to 500 watt illumination, fan cooled, ammeter control, enclosed interchangeable resistance, speed control, stills, quick automatic rewind, 2" lens, complete with carrying cover. Excellent condition. £46

Ditto, but normal black model and with 200 watt lamp. Nice condition. £37 10s.

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16mm. PAILLARD "C", (Black) 250 watt lamp, speed control, stills, 45mm. Hermagis lens, geared rewind, complete with resistance. Nice condition. £15 10s.

16mm. AMPRO SOUND, Model "M", 500 watt lamp, 8 watt undistorted output, plug for microphone, 2" projection lens, 2 speeds for sound or silent films, still picture device, automatic geared rewind, 1600 Ft. arms, complete with speaker. The whole outfit is in 2 carrying cases. Excellent condition. £89 10s.

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16mm. AGFA DOMESTINO, 100 watt, speed control, stills, 2" projection lens, built-in resistance 110-220 volts, complete in case. Very nice condition. £11 10s.

16mm. ENSIGN S.S. 100 watt, motor speed control, complete with resistance for all voltages 100-250 A.C. or D.C. and Box. £6 10s.

16mm. VICTOR, Bronze model 20, 750 watt lamp, film tripping device, reverse and stills, motor speed regulator, 2" Dallmeyer Maxlite lens, revider, screw tilting adjustment, complete in carrying case. As new. £42 10s.

9.5mm. PROJECTORS

9.5mm. PATHE HOME (single Claw) hand crank, built-in resistance 100-115 volts. Good working order. £2 19s. 6d.

9.5mm. PATHE HOME (2 claw model) hand crank, complete with resistance 110-115 volts. Nice order. £3 15s.

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9.5mm. DEKKO, (Hand crank), complete with super attachment and case. £2 19s. 6d.

9.5mm. PATHE HOME "G.2" Model, motor with speed control, super attachment and resistance for all voltages 100-250. In excellent condition. £6 10s.

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16mm. CAMERAS

16mm. CINE KODAK "B.B." JUNR. 50 ft. Model, f/1.9 Kodak Anas. lens, direct vision finder, footage indicator. Almost new. £12 10s.

16mm. ENSIGN KINECAM, f/1.5 Dallmeyer Speed Anas. lens, (interchangeable), 3 speeds, D.V. optical finder, footage indicator, leather case. £13 10s.

16mm. CINE KODAK "B" 100 ft. Model, f/1.9 Kodak Anas. lens, (interchangeable), D.V. and Waist level view finders, footage indicator, leather case. Nice condition. £13 10s.

16mm. VICTOR Model, 3 Turret head, f/3.5 Dallmeyer lens, visual focussing, adjustable speeds, D.V. finder, footage indicator, motor drive or hand crank, with case. Good working order. £23 10s.

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9.5mm. CINE NIZO, f/1.5 Meyer (interchangeable mount), 2 speeds 16 and 32, motor drive and hand crank for trick work, footage indicator, optical D.V. finder, complete with case. As new. £11 10s.

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8mm. CINE KODAK, f/3.5 Kodak Anas. lens, universal focus, Direct Vision finder, footage indicator. Almost new. £7 10s.

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Edited by
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7

DWARFS on DISNEY

in

The Summer Number, Out June 1st

2/6

also

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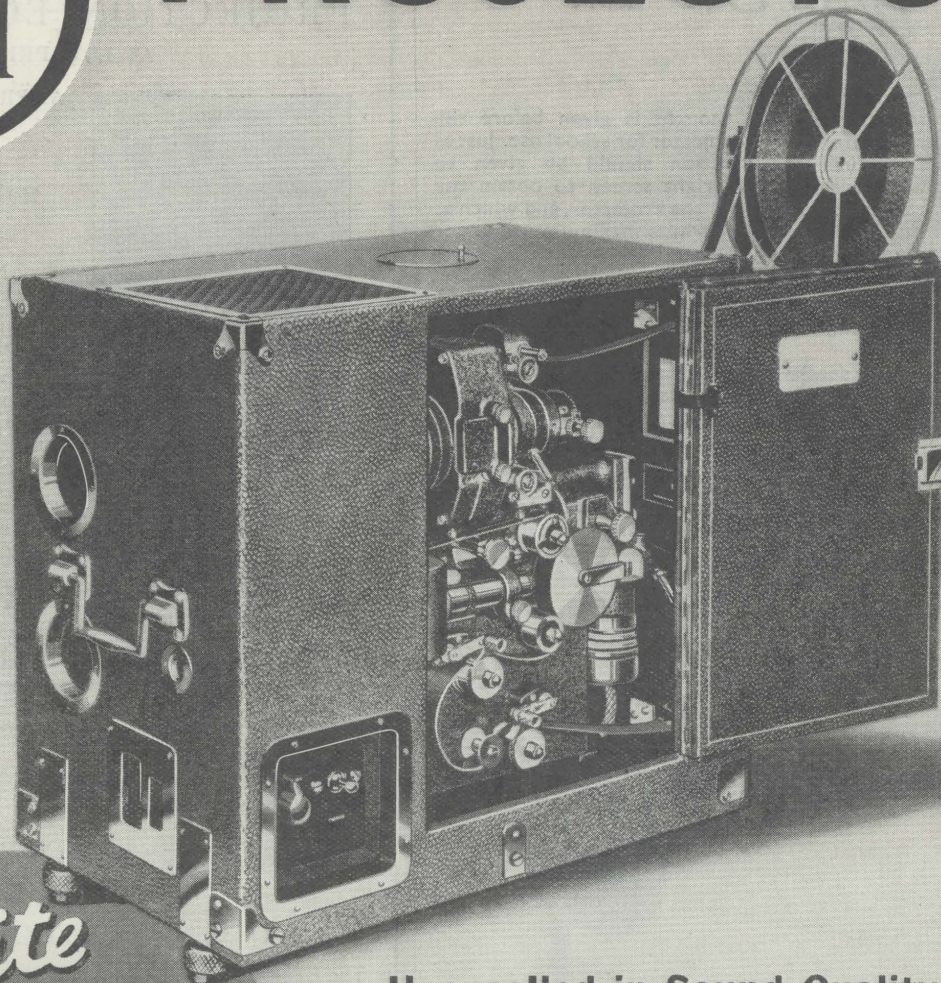
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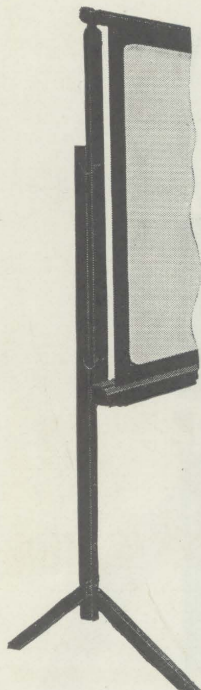
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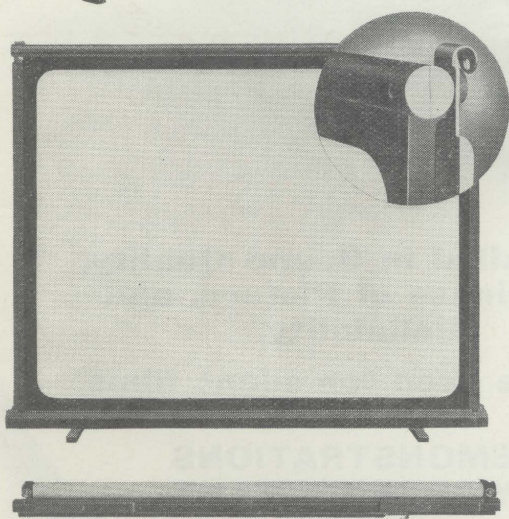


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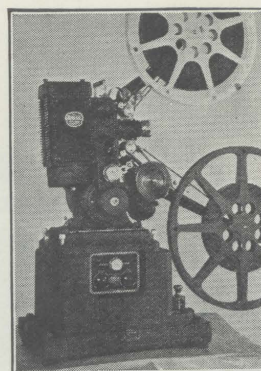
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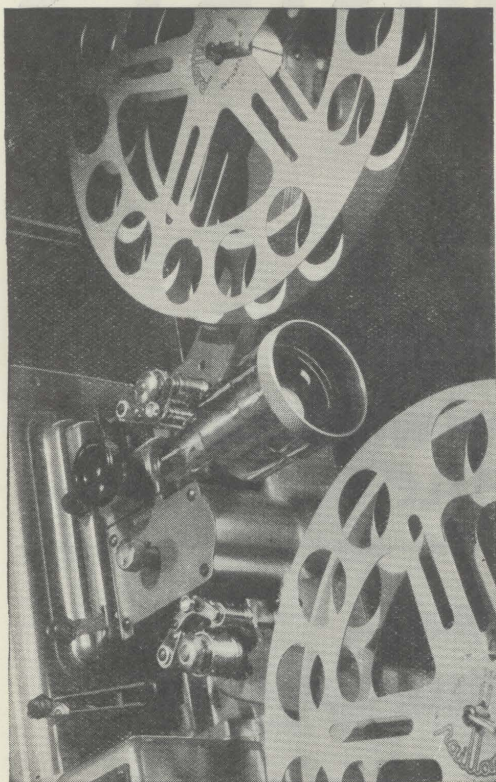
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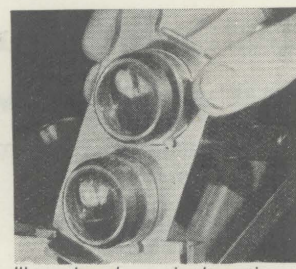


Illustration shows simple action of changing condensers.

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Here's a selection of the films available to all Film Institutes, Schools and other bodies having their own projectors—for 16 mm. or 35 mm. sound films.

On Smoke Abatement Health and Education

'THE SMOKE MENACE'

About a national problem of startling proportions.

15 minutes.

'NUTRITION'

Surveys inadequate food budgets among large numbers of people: suggests ways and means to good diet.

28 minutes.

'CHILDREN AT SCHOOL'

A review of the public education system of this country.

24 minutes.

On Housing

'KENSAL HOUSE'

A review of a housing estate which marks a revolution in housing for this country—with nursery School and tenants' clubs.

15 minutes.

'HOUSING PROBLEMS'

A vivid description of slum life by those who have to live there.

20 minutes.

On Gas Manufacture

'HOW GAS IS MADE'

10 minutes.

'THE ROMANCE OF A LUMP OF COAL'

5 minutes.

On By-Products

'THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO LITTLE'

5 minutes.

On Cooking

'DAISY BELL COMES TO TOWN'

Milk cookery with the Griffiths Brothers as a cow.

10 minutes.

'POTS AND PLANS'

The first British film on Kitchen Planning.

10 minutes.

'HOW TO COOK'

M. Boulestin gives instructions on basic principles of cooking.

15 minutes.

'PARTY DISH'

M. Boulestin again, making something more elaborate.

15 minutes.

'DINNER HOUR'

How the big hotels and restaurants manage in the rush hour.

16 minutes.



If you wish to make up a programme of these and other films of travel and cartoon, write to Mr. Thomas Baird, Film Officer of the British Commercial Gas Association, Gas Industry House, 1 Grosvenor Place, S.W.1.

PUBLISHED BY THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE 4 GREAT RUSSELL STREET LONDON WC1

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COVER STILL: A specially posed photograph of Elsa Lanchester and Charles Laughton as they appear in <i>Vessel of Wrath</i> , a Pommer-Laughton production.			

TO READERS

The utmost latitude is given to contributors to SIGHT AND SOUND and, therefore, the opinions expressed in signed articles are not necessarily in agreement with those of the British Film Institute.

Editorial and Publishing Offices: British Film Institute, 4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1. SIGHT AND SOUND is sent free to members of the Institute (annual subscription £1. 1s. od.). The annual subscription for SIGHT AND SOUND is 2s. 6d. including postage. Subscription forms enclosed in this issue. Sole Advertising Agent, to whom all enquiries should be addressed: E. E. Preston, 69 Fleet Street, London, E.C.4.

"Silent" TALKIES

FILMOSOUND 138-J

No, not a contradiction in terms; the new Filmosound 138-J has the projector unit encased in a special noise-excluding "blimp" outer case. The exclusion of all extraneous noise is of immense importance where the projector and audience are in the same room. To hear your Home Talkies without the distraction of "running" noise, that is what Filmosound 138-J offers you. It retains all the fine features of the Filmosound 138 range, except that it is a two case model. The second case contains a twelve-

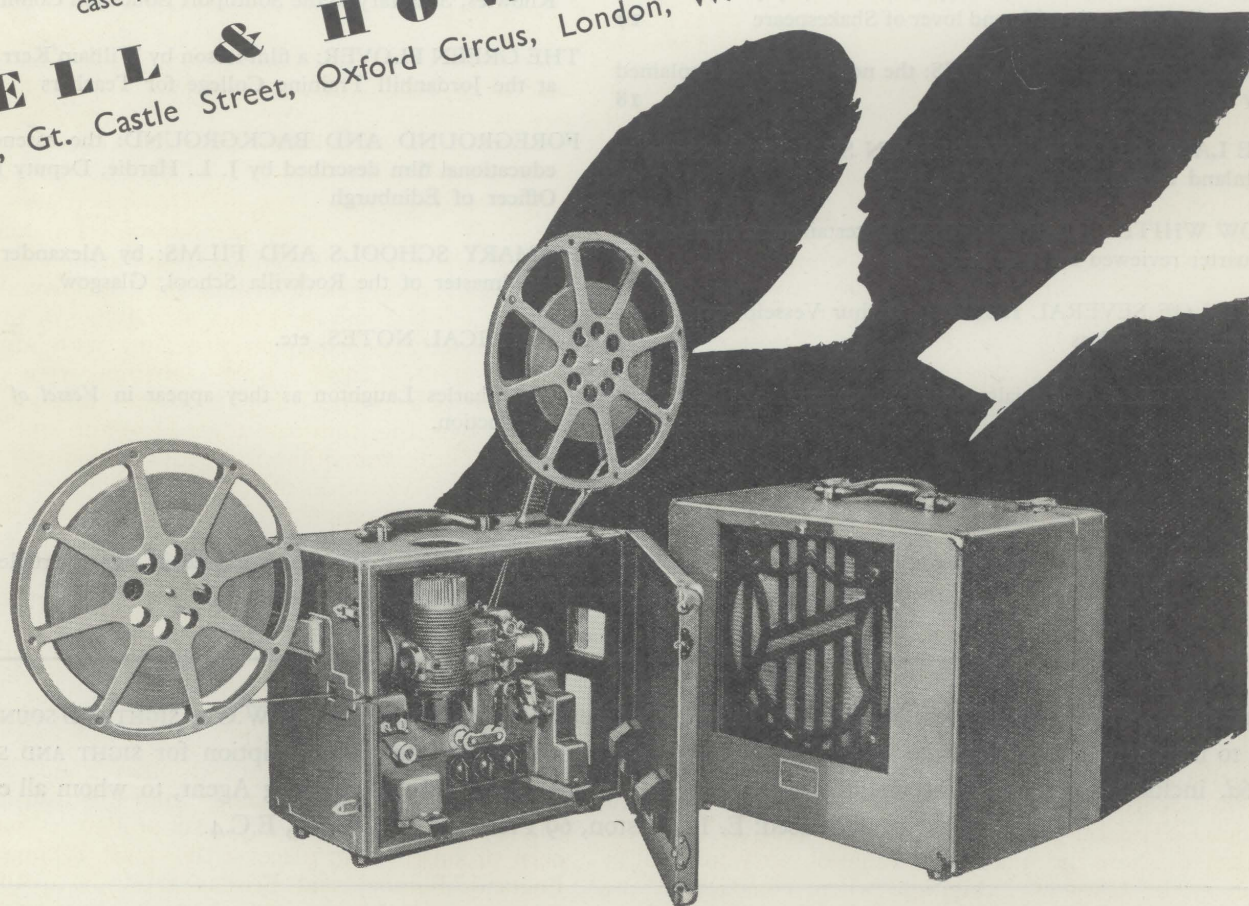
inch speaker reproducing sound with remarkable fidelity and volume.

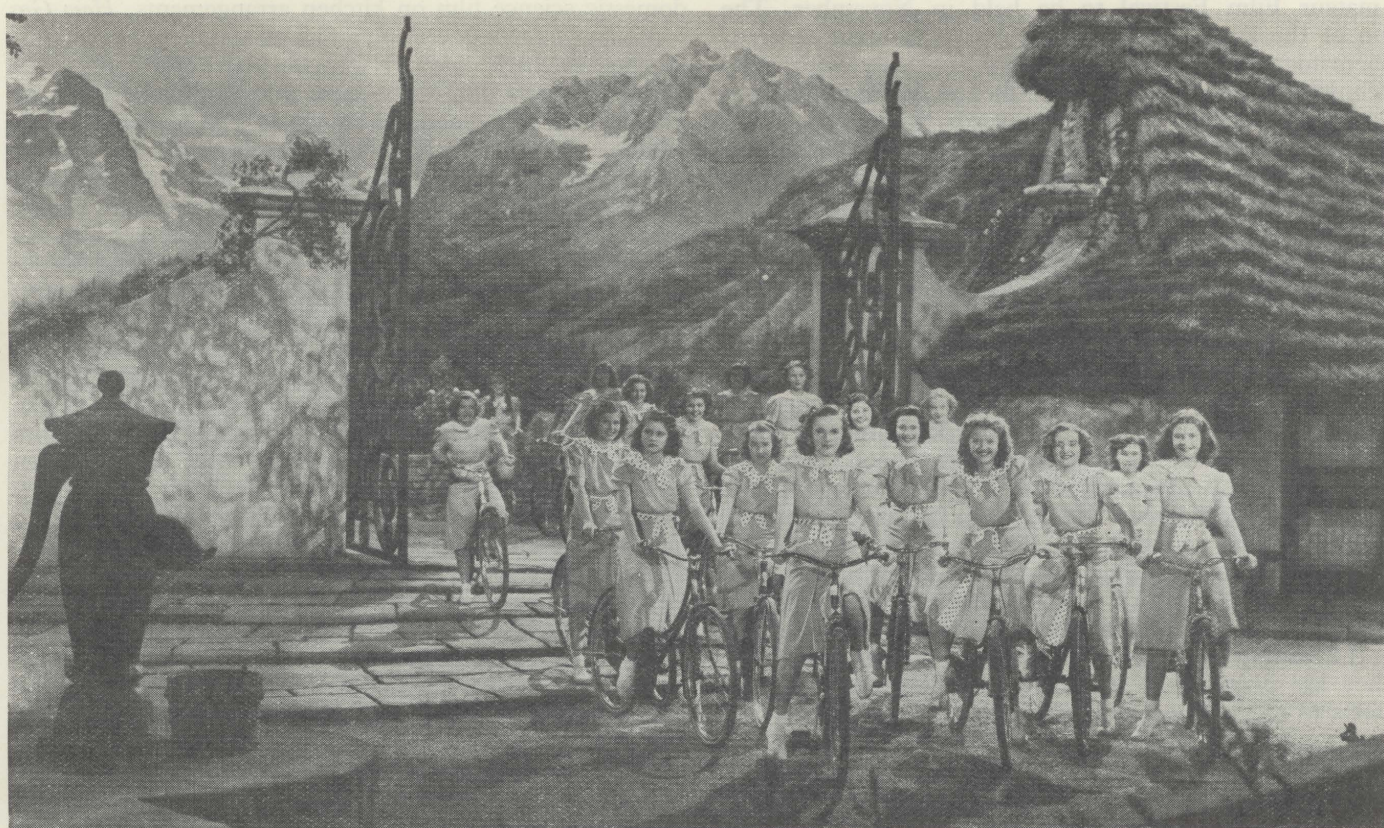
The projector provides both clutch and reverse and may be used for silent as well as sound film. Bell & Howell precision is maintained throughout the Filmosound range. Whether it's the schoolroom, an institute hall, or the home, performances of theatre quality are assured.

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Deanna Durbin in *Mad About Music*

Universal

THE QUARTER

SPRING IS here, and with it sunshine, lambs and the new Films Act. The latter is fully analysed on another page, but everywhere in Wardour Street and even as far away as Hollywood there are sighs of relief that at last the uncertainties and alarms, the checks and counter-checks, are over. At least they know the best—or the worst! And in British studios there are rumblings of productions which may develop into a full-blooded, healthy roar.

PROPAGANDA

Within the last few weeks a number of agencies have interested themselves in putting Britain on the screen. Early in February the Prime Minister announced the formation of a co-ordinating committee under the chairmanship of Sir Robert Vansittart. The business of the Committee is to ensure the best use being made of the various efforts now being conducted to spread a better understanding abroad of this country and of the British people. Next the Imperial Relations Trust set up a special film sub-committee to investigate the question of the distribution and interchange of non-theatrical films between the members of the British Commonwealth. Now the Royal Empire Society are considering the same matter rather from the point of view of production and the Dominions and Colonies Panel of the British Film Institute are bringing out a report on the distribution and display of teaching films in the Empire. The burgeoning of this new zeal for using the screen to show the undoubted value of our wares will be seen at the Glasgow Exhibition, where considerable use is to be made of films both in the official pavilions and by

individual exhibitors, many of whom are building their private theatres.

CHANCE FOR SCENARIO WRITERS

Meanwhile, from peaceful Geneva comes news of a competition, with prizes, for scenarios for documentary films on the League of Nations. There are two sections, the first for a general film describing the fundamental purposes of the Covenant and the principal activities of the League, and the second for a picture dealing with some special branch of the League's work—anything from the settlement of some political dispute to the organisation of the control over the legitimate trade in opium and dangerous drugs. The competition is open to amateurs and professionals alike, and in the event of a film being produced from one of the scripts the author may be invited to assist in the production. Scenarios must be in by August 1st, and all requests for further information should be addressed to the Director, Information Section, Secretariat of the League of Nations, Geneva. The judges include representatives from France, Poland, Holland, Denmark and, from England, Mr. Neville Kearney.

TWO OTHER COMPETITIONS

Here, also, is news about two other competitions. Full details of the Empire Amateur Film Festival at Glasgow will be found in this SIGHT AND SOUND; entries have already been promised from places as far apart as Singapore and England, Bombay and Brisbane and the quality of the films is expected to be very high. And, following the Empire

Festival, the Edinburgh Film Guild announce another Amateur Film Festival to be held in November. The aim of the latter, it is stated, "is to encourage amateur cinematographers to produce films not only with good technique but with worth-while themes dealing with contemporary affairs." In other words, the competition should be a good training ground for those anxious to become the documentary producers of the future. In fact, Mr. Michael Powell, director of *The Edge of the World*, offers the maker of the best all-round film submitted a free trip to London to act for one week as assistant on whatever film he may be directing at the time.

SUB-STANDARD AND DOCUMENTARIES

The future of documentary and teaching films, already bright, looks like becoming brighter yet. Elsewhere in this issue details are given of the excellent progress being made in the installation of projectors in schools. Now, we are informed by the newly-formed Sub-Standard Cinematograph Association, a "drive" is to be made to expand the production of educational films.

The Sub-Standard Cinematograph Association—Chairman, Mr. F. A. Hoare; Vice-Chairman, Mr. H. Bruce Woolfe—claims to include among its twenty-two members all the leading producers of short and sub-standard films. They are planning a campaign to pool their ideas and efforts to secure more and better films for schools.

NOT HARMFUL

Two important reports published during the Quarter stress facts often emphasised in these columns—that the films, as a whole, are *not* harmful to children and that the general tone of film productions is at least as high as that of any other form of entertainment from novels to the stage.

The first point is dealt with in a departmental report to the Government of Northern Ireland, which states: "There is a belief in some quarters that the existence of juvenile delinquency is largely to be attributed to the influence of the cinema upon the impressionable minds of children. There is insufficient evidence to support this view. . . . We think it neither necessary nor practicable to impose any further restrictions on the admission of children to cinemas." The Report also refers to the speeches of Dr. Emanuel Miller, Honorary Director of the East London Child Guidance Clinic, and of Mr. S. W. Harriss, Assistant Under Secretary of State at the Home Office, made at the Conference on Films for Children organised by the British Film Institute in November, 1936.

The second report is that of the Public Morality Council, which states that during 1937 a "much appreciated marked improvement in tone and presentation" was shown in films.

THE NATIONAL FILM LIBRARY

A number of interesting additions have been made to the Loan Section of the National Film Library. Three 16mm. silent diagram films, $\ddot{X} + X = O$, $\ddot{X} + X = A$ *Sin Nt* and *Euclid 1.32* have been presented by the producer, Mr. G. B. D. Salt; the first two are examples of a new notation in differential equations devised by Mr. Robert Fairthorne. $\ddot{X} + X = O$ has been particularly well commended in the Institute's Monthly Film Bulletin. A further notable addition is a series of six documentary films pro-

duced by the Gas Industry, namely *Pots and Plans*, a domestic science film on kitchen arrangements, *How Gas is Made*, *Children at School*, a film on the State educational system (which, incidentally, forms an interesting comparison with a Japanese film of the same title also in the Library), *Enough to Eat?* (sometimes known as *The Nutrition Film*), *Housing Problems*, a film on slum clearance and *Smoke Menace* which deals with the damage to health and property caused by smoke in cities and towns. All these are 16mm. sound films. 35mm. and 16mm. copies of another film of a similar kind, *Here is the Land*, produced by the Land Settlement Association, are also being circulated by the Library; this shows in detail how unemployed men under the Association's scheme are taken from destitute areas and settled on the land. *Thirst*, a 16mm. silent film, tells the story of an Egyptian boy who almost dies of thirst in the desert; while of interest to young children as a story film it also has considerable geographical value and has been purchased under the terms of the donation made by J. Fairgrieve, Esq., M.A., F.R.G.S. *War Without End*, a film of hospital work, which is described more fully elsewhere in this issue, is also obtainable from the Library. Finally may be mentioned two silent 16mm. films on the manufacture of glass, *Optical Glass Manufacture* and *The Story of Webb Corbett Crystal*.

A second and enlarged edition of the complete National Film Library Catalogue has just been published and is on sale at the price of one shilling. The new edition gives full details of all films in the Library, both in the Preservation and Loan Sections, and contains a number of half-tone plates illustrating some of the more interesting films in the collection. For these who are interested particularly in the films obtainable on loan, an off-print of the Loan Section only is available.

CANADIAN FILM LIBRARY AND THE OVERSEAS LEAGUE

Not the least of the excellent—and indeed invaluable—work done by the Overseas League is the establishment of its Film Library in Canada. Its latest catalogue contains many hundreds of films from the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, the Far East, the West Indies and the remainder of the British Empire, all of which are available to the schools, teachers and general public of Canada at a very nominal hiring charge. A better opportunity for young Canadians to realise the heritage that is theirs as members of the British Empire it would be difficult to imagine.

One of the chief aims of the Overseas League is to promote patriotism in no spirit of hostility to any other nation, to emphasise all that the British Commonwealth of Nations stands for, and to assist in maintaining its honourable traditions. Nothing better could possibly have been done to further this object than the establishment of such a Film Library.

SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa has also sent us its first catalogue of the National Film Library in the Union. This also contains a very large number of films useful for educational purposes, accompanied by notes showing the best way of using the material in the classroom. A most ambitious and valuable undertaking, the Library should be a valuable ally in the campaign to introduce the film into the schools of the Union. One qualified criticism, however, is that the number of British films included in the catalogue seems very small.

THE FILM AND THE YOUNG PERSON

EIGHTEEN MONTHS ago the British Film Institute called a conference to consider how film entertainment specifically designed for children could be provided at public cinemas. From this conference certain clear-cut conclusions emerged. On the question of the supply of suitable films, for instance, it was discovered that the takings are not large enough to enable special children's films to be made. A constant supply of films for children's matinees, therefore, can only be maintained if special steps are taken to prevent suitable films of the "D" category in the *Monthly Film Bulletin* from being junked at the end of their commercial run. The psychologists pointed out that children can easily be frightened by the magnification of common objects to vast dimensions. "The sight of uncurling tentacles and agonising writhings of insects emerging from cocoons," said Dr. Emanuel Miller, "is eerie in the extreme, and many children otherwise normal have been put off by such sights." Similarly some of the Disney cartoons may have a terrifying effect. At the same time many things which uninstructed adults surmise are bad for children, in point of fact are not. As an example, good clean killing where Right is triumphant has no bad effects.

In the matter of the organisation of children's entertainment, it became clear that the cinema industry had reached the limit of unsupported effort. If regular children's entertainments are to become general, the onus of responsibility would have to be shared between the trade, the educational world and the social organisations, all of whom have something to contribute.

In the opinion of the British Film Institute, the time has now come to tackle the more difficult problem of the effect of the film on the young person. It is admittedly only one aspect of the larger problem of Leisure as a whole, but it is a very important one in view of the fact that 23,000,000 people a week spend some four hours of their leisure time in the cinema.

Preliminary investigations show that the average young person is a regular attendant at the cinema, but in the towns at least is not a patron of any one house. They tend to "shop" for their entertainment and will even spend money on buses and trams before finally deciding in which theatre to spend their money.

An interesting sidelight is that the girl of to-day as a result of her visits to films has far better table manners and a greater sense of deportment than had the girls of similar ages a few years ago. The space which the "fan" papers give to the most intimate details of the popular film stars' lives is sufficient indication of the extent to which

heroine worship—and hero worship, too—is prevalent amongst the young persons of both sexes, though mainly amongst the feminine element. Girls on the whole seem to prefer the sentimental, though they are somewhat shaken by successes in love and not infrequently morally repelled. Boys favour the lurid and go to see the most horrific films in order to be able to boast that they sat through the full seven reels and never turned a hair. How far this is any worse than the telling of weird tales by firelight or the reading of short stories in the dead of night, is a matter for the psychologists to decide.

Perhaps the two most deleterious effects of the film that have come to light are the creation of false standards and the stimulation of petty deceit on the part of the younger boys who want to get into an "A" film before they are sixteen. Cases are not unknown when an older brother's clothes have been laid under tribute and an unlighted cigarette stuck between the lips to give verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing approach to the box office. These deceitful habits are further developed and encouraged by the sight of successful petty deceit in the film plots of some films.

This, however, is far less worrying than the creation of false standards. It is on record that many patrons expressed disappointment at scenes recently taken inside Buckingham Palace because they had imagined it to be as flashy as a super-set in Hollywood. Without the necessary background of knowledge, these young persons cannot distinguish truth from fiction, and the reality of the screen truth from fiction, and the reality of the screen image and the power of the publicity agents is so great that their conception of how the best people live is almost grotesque. Neither on nor off the screen can they imagine that their favourite star lives a normal life and would probably be as content with a glass of water and a bread and cheese luncheon as with a magnum of champagne and caviare under the shaded lights of a sumptuous restaurant. This lack of knowledge makes the propaganda value of the film enormous. It is small wonder that at long last the British Government has awakened to the fact that British ways and British culture have not as large a place on screens as they deserve. There is no doubt, moreover, that the indirect benefit accruing from the showing of British films in foreign countries would be of enormous importance to our export trade. In this connection it is arguable that the refrigerator has penetrated the fastness of the English home largely as the result of it appearing as a standard fixture in American kitchens as shown in the films.

The first general conclusions which the Institute has drawn from its preliminary talks are very similar to those of the previous conference. The ultimate responsibility in regard to the attendance of young persons at the cinema rests upon the parents. It cannot be escaped though it can be brought more strongly to the notice of those inclined to shirk it by the activities of the social bodies and organisations. The Mothers' Union or the Women's Institutes, for example, can play a tremendous part in bringing home the fact that mere parental grumbling without corresponding action can avail nothing. In regard to the young persons themselves the Scout and Guide movements, the National Council of Girls' Clubs, and the welfare workers in the large industrial concerns can effect a great deal by engendering a critical attitude of mind. The first steps in this direction must be taken at school. The teachers' part is, therefore, of the highest importance. First and foremost

the films used for instructional purposes should be as near perfection as possible. The children will then be accustomed to seeing good stuff. Secondly, a place should be found in the life of the school to develop film appreciation in exactly the same manner as efforts are made to develop the appreciation of such other arts as music or the drama. If the modern educational tendency towards the desirability of enlarging the cultural horizon of the child is maintained, it should not be difficult to find a place for film appreciation, especially now that the background film is coming into its own.

There is no reason why these preliminary observations should not be borne out by more detailed study. The Institute, we agree, therefore, is justified in continuing its investigations with the ultimate objective of thrashing the whole matter out in the autumn at a general conference on the problem of the young person and the film.

OVER THE BORDER

THE MOST important event in the history of the Scottish Film Council took place on Monday, February 14th, when, at a Luncheon in the Grosvenor Restaurant, Glasgow, the establishment of a Scottish Film Office of the Scottish Film Council was announced. It is being financed partly by the British Film Institute and partly by contributions raised in Scotland. Mr. A. Russell Borland, M.A., formerly Joint Honorary Organising Secretary of the Scottish Educational Film Association, has been appointed Secretary of the Scottish Film Council. He will be responsible for the management of the Office, which is at 26 India Street, Glasgow, C.2.

Following the establishment of the Scottish Film Office, the Scottish Film Council has been reconstituted. The new Council is composed of Lord Nigel Douglas Hamilton (Chairman), Dr. J. W. Low (Vice-Chairman), A. B. King, George Singleton, James Welsh (Cinema Exhibitors' Association), Sam Bendon (Kinematograph Renters' Society), William E. Dickie (Federation of British Industries), H. Forsyth Hardy, C. A. Oakley, J. A. Paton Walker (Federation of Film Societies), Thomas Blake, Charles M. Boyle (Scottish Education Film Association), William E. McKinlay, Ronald M. Munro (Educational Institute of Scotland), Rev. Arthur H. Dunnett (Scottish Churches' Film Guild), Atherton Gray (Association of County Councils), Rev. John Chambers (National Committee for Training of Teachers), James B. Frizell (Association of Directors of Education), Jack Robertson, Junr., Stanley Russell (Representatives of Public Interests). Representatives have still to be appointed by the Association of Counties of Cities, the Scottish Council for Research in Education, the British Institute of Adult Education and the Workers' Educational Association.

The new Secretary enters into his office with much work to do. Thanks to the co-operation of the Scottish Educational Film Association, the Educational Film Reviewing Scheme has made much progress, and a considerable number of reviews await publication. Seventy reviewing groups, representing a total of almost one thousand teachers, are

now engaged in this work, and in order to keep pace with the output of these groups it has been decided to increase the number of specialist panels whose duty it is to assess the group reviews. The Council is arranging for the publication of the reviews four times a year. In order to give a lead to the producers on the types of films that teachers want, the members of the reviewing groups were asked to submit treatments of films which they would like to use in the classroom. Almost one thousand of these treatments have been received by the specialist panels, and, after editing, they will be submitted to the producers.

Under the auspices of the Scottish Film Office, a Conference of Directors of Education was held in Glasgow on Friday, March 18th, to discuss the administrative problems arising from the introduction of the cinematograph to schools. A scheme for the establishment of a Scottish Central Film Library was submitted. It was unanimously agreed that a central library was essential to the development of the use of educational films in Scottish schools, and the Secretary undertook to negotiate for its establishment.

A conference on Entertainment Films for Children is being organised in the Empire Exhibition on Saturday, September 10th. A special childrens' matinee will be held in the morning in a Glasgow cinema, and the conference will take place in the afternoon at the Exhibition.

The Scottish Educational Film Association has now eleven branches with a membership of over 4,300. The second handbook of the Association has just been published, and is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. Over 70,000 children have attended the Saturday morning matinees held this year by the Association. A very successful experiment was the organisation of two foreign language matinees by Glasgow Film Society in co-operation with the Glasgow Branch of the S.E.F.A. The feature films were *Klein Dorrit* and *Merlusse*. The "Isabel Elder" trophy for the best film of the year produced by the experimental producing units of the Association was awarded to the Lanarkshire unit's film *Coal Mining in Central Scotland*.

WANTED—A GENIUS

by ANTHONY ASQUITH

"In this increasingly standardised and totalitarian world of films . . . we must pray for the advent of a tremendous individualist of whose productions the film magnates may say 'There are no such films' but who will persuade the public to come to see and to be conquered"

HOW EASY it must have been to live in an age when there was a fixed standard for every activity of the human mind—ethics, metaphysics, art and religion. When everything that did not conform to that standard was automatically disqualified from consideration if it was not positively persecuted as heresy. How delightful to be able to say as the old Chinese poet said on reading the verse submitted to him by a young man: "Why, there is no such poem". I believe that such reflections as this are consciously or unconsciously behind the current revolt against the overwhelming flood of nineteenth century liberal individualism. The days are passing when, to borrow a phrase of Mr. Guedella's, any stigma did to beat a dogma. Indeed such an assault can be dangerous if not fatal. The dogma is liable to turn and bite us, and the consequences, as we have seen, may be the concentration camp or "liquidation".

The film is the only medium which belongs to this age and no other. Some countries, pre-eminently Russia, have shown us how effectively it can be used in the service of a political code. In the silent days, the Soviet film was preacher, pulpit and sermon in one. And though chiefly designed for home consumption, it was also a powerful missionary. The brilliance and originality of the technique sometimes dazzled the sentinels of our mind into letting pass ideas which in our more rational moments we would have questioned and suspected. Even those of us to whom the reiterated spectacle of peasants wreathing motor-tractors with garlands or workmen smiling at each other through cog-wheels in a brotherly way ultimately pall, were seduced by the vividness and pictorial force with which these scenes were presented.

VIOLENTLY RETROGRADE

But with the coming of sound, a remarkable change took place. I do not pretend to have seen more than a small proportion of Russian sound-films so there are, no doubt, exceptions, but the general tendency as far as film technique is concerned is violently retrograde. And Russia is certainly not unique in this. I have only singled her out because she had evolved such an individual and advanced style of silent film. In every film-making country, in my opinion, the arrival of the talking film had the same effect. It not only killed the silent film but at first, at any rate, failed to

substitute anything positive for it. This though sad was natural, because the sound-film is such an essentially different medium from the silent film. What is more serious is that there seems no sign of any true advance in sound-film technique. By this I do not mean that no competent or really imaginative sound-films have been made but only that there seems no impulse to explore and exploit this medium as there was in the later days of silent films. Indeed, paradoxically, the boldest experiment in the use of sound came early in the development of the talking film and were the work of directors who were also innovators in silent film technique such as Hitchcock and Rene Clair. I can think of one exception. There may, of course, have



Advance still from *Pygmalion*, co-directed by Leslie Howard and Anthony Asquith
A Pascal Production

been others. Mamoulian, who was a distinguished stage director, in his first film *Applause* used sound most imaginatively and with true instinct for the sound-film medium. I shall never forget the close-up of Helen Morgan after she has taken poison, sitting by the window waiting for death with the light of the electric signs reflected on her face and the distant noise of traffic rising from the street far below. But *Applause* was comparatively a failure and I believe that was because it came too early; the novelty of speech had not worn off and to the average audience its very qualities were disturbing, like all innovations.

A DEADHEAD OF COMPETENCE

The spoken word makes it fatally easy to convey the plot to the audience in some kind of fashion. But it is not easy to tell a story at all in silent films and exceedingly difficult to tell it in such a way that the audience are unconscious of the limitations of the medium. Writing a silent script needed far greater concentration and effort of the visual imagination just because the story had to be conveyed to the audience without any help from the spoken and as little as possible from the written word. This compelled the silent film directors to be continuously alert in technical invention, and I believe in consequence that the silent film audience was capable of appreciating much more advanced and interesting work than the average sound-film audience just because up to a point the medium is so much easier. The best silent films required a far greater degree of imaginative response from the audience than any but a very few talking films. At present the talking film seems to have reached a deadlock of competence

from which I see few signs of its emerging, merely because the public are at present satisfied. But soon audiences will require something more to stimulate their interest. There are signs of this in the increasing number of colour films. The big companies hope, I fancy, that in colour they have found the stimulus needed for the appetite of the audience. Personally I feel that colour is a side issue. Its use in no way fundamentally changes the medium in the way that the addition of sound changed the silent film. What I believe will soon be necessary is a new approach to and understanding of sound-film as a medium. At the present moment it is only half hatched. It has not decided what elements of the silent film it can most readily assimilate and what elements of the theatre, and it cannot be too strongly emphasised that though it owes something to both it is a totally different medium from either. And salvation can no more be found in trying to make a talkie as like a silent film as possible than in imitating a stage play. What I feel is needed is a D. W. Griffith—a man whose tremendous technical innovations come from instinct and impulse and arise solely from the overwhelming impulse to say something. The public—quite rightly—reject technical ingenuity, however interesting in itself, of which it is aware. But it will accept the most revolutionary innovations if they arise out of the telling of the story, e.g. the last reel of *Intolerance*. So in this increasingly standardised and totalitarian world of films I think—I admit I am prejudiced—we must pray for the advent of a tremendous individualist of whose productions the film magnates may, it is true, say “There are no such films” but who will persuade the public to come to see and to be conquered.



Moscow Nights, directed by Anthony Asquith

London Film

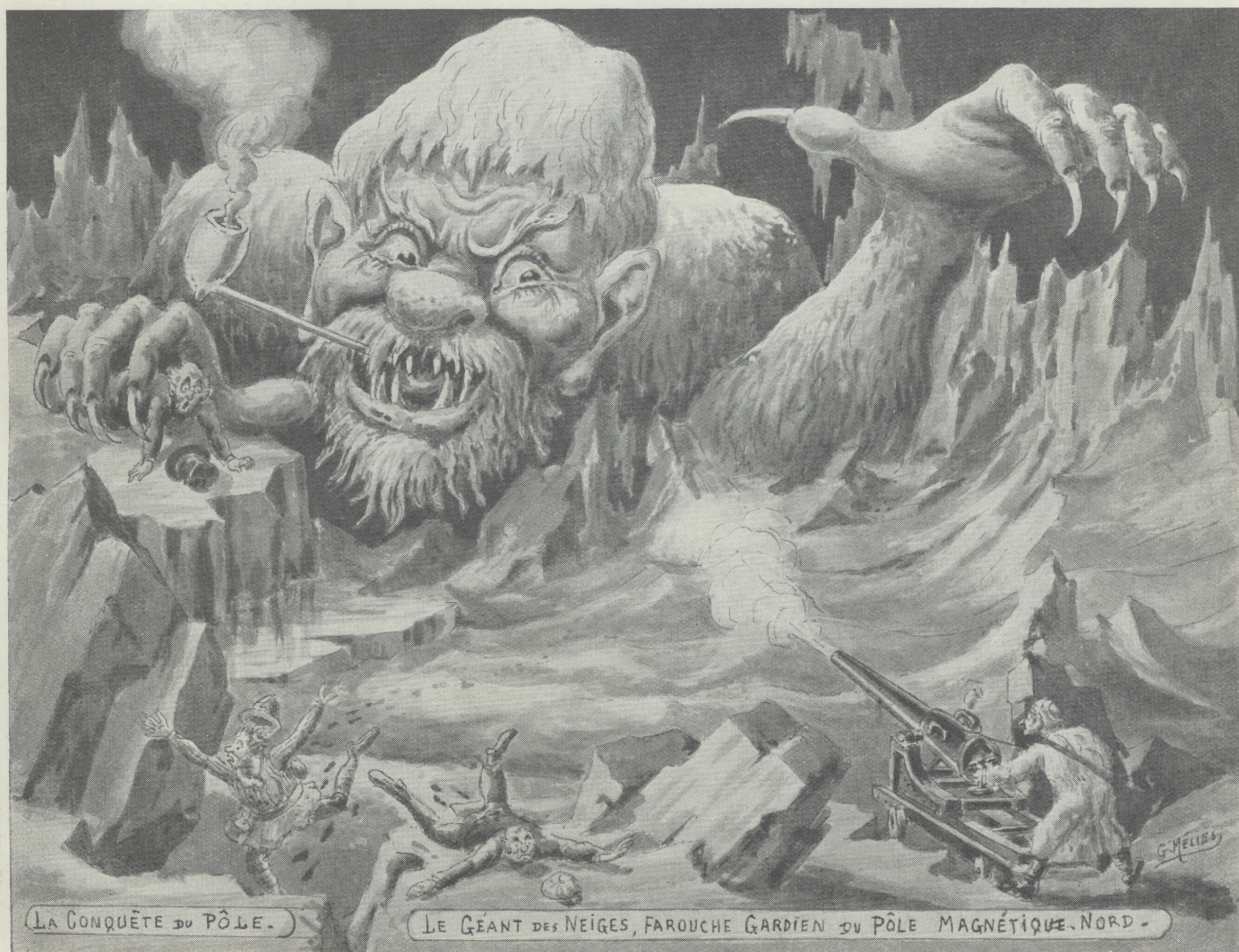
THE SILVER LINING

By GEORGES MÉLIÈS

SIGHT AND SOUND has the privilege of publishing an article by Georges Méliès, the famous French Producer, written shortly before his death last January. It tells of the silver lining of laughter behind the worst studio mishaps. The illustrations are from original designs made by the author for his films

IN SPITE OF what the layman may think, a film studio is no more the place for wild amusement than the backstage of a theatre. There is too much to worry about. It often happens that a director, for all his presence of mind, his calm and self-control, when things go wrong, finds his patience giving way to exasperation, then to anger and finally to complete rage. The cause may be something entirely unforeseen, or the more common one of bad takes, due either to poor acting or to the stupidity of inexperienced extras, who have remembered nothing of the instructions lavished on them before shooting, even after countless rehearsals. I am sure, from my own experience, that other directors will be found to agree with me, since at some time or other they are all victims of unfortunate mishaps. On the other hand, things fortunately happen out of the blue which change one's anger into laughter. In spite of the annoyance and the time lost over a bad take or, worse, the loss of money it involves you in if you are, as I was, your own backer (a rare thing nowadays), it is impossible to suppress these spontaneous outbursts of laughter no matter how solemnly you may carry out your role of director. Nor, indeed, can you always compete with some unexpected and saucy gag slipped into the scene, usually by an English or an American comedian, both of whom are masters in the art of playing the fool with a straight face.

Here, then, is one of these unexpectedly comic incidents. We were shooting the last scene of an elaborate fairy story,

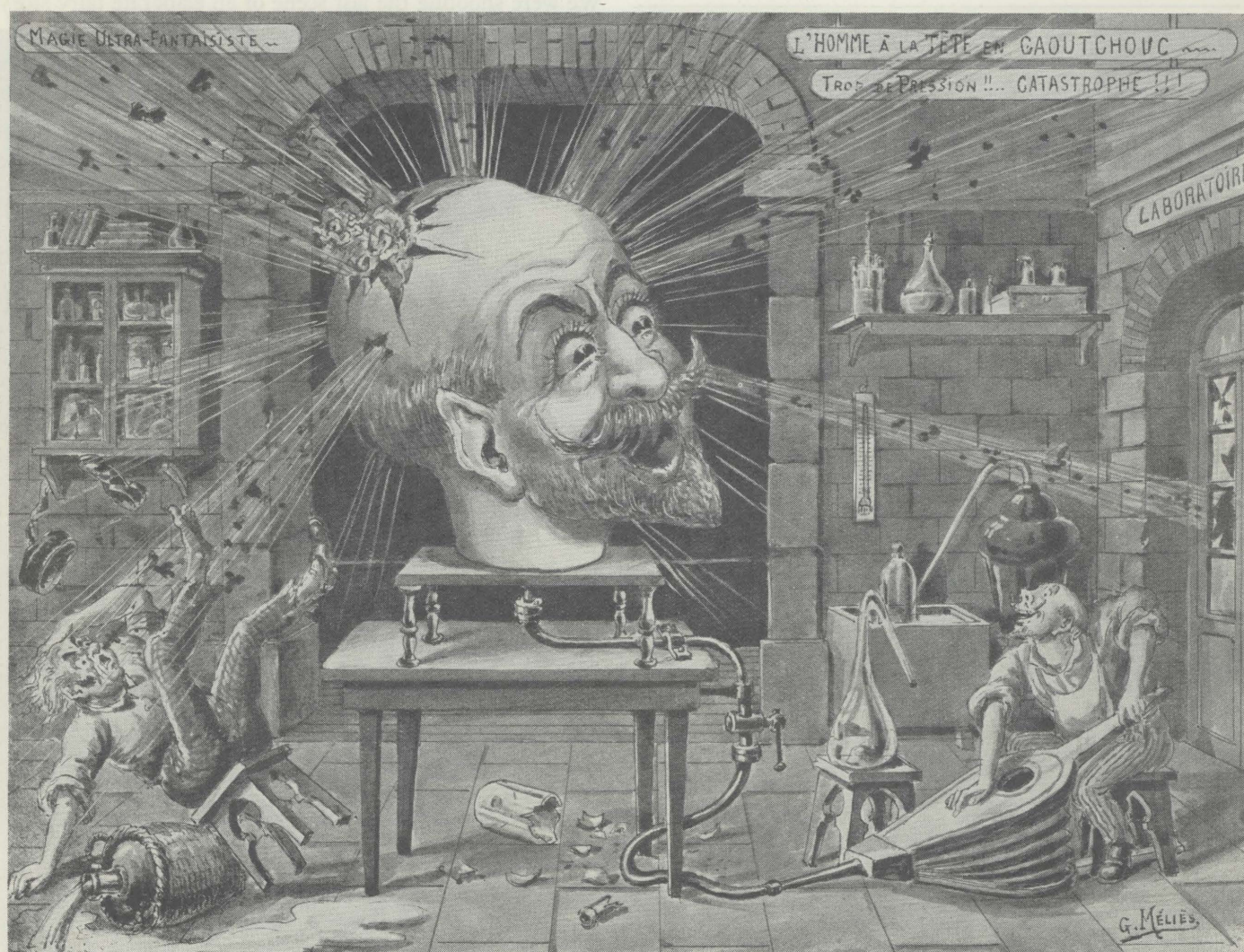


LA CONQUÊTE DU PÔLE.

LE GÉANT DES NEIGES, FAROUCHE GARDIEN DU PÔLE MAGNÉTIQUE NORD.

portraying the marriage of Princess Azurina and Prince Bel-Azor. Don't imagine that I am going to bore you with the whole story. We had put up a magnificent palace set, entirely imaginary in detail, as befitting a fairy story. At the far end of the set there was a throne, and on its left, an elaborate staircase. The bridal procession came down the staircase and marched across the set in front of the king. We got an amusing effect by giving the bride a seemingly endless train supported by twenty-four pages, each smaller than the other, and with a microscopic dwarf holding the end of it, so that long after the procession had passed the train continued to move across the scene. During the rehearsals I noticed that the four halberdiers needed as guards round the throne were missing. It was just an oversight on the call-sheet. We were at Montreuil-sous-Bois. I sent one of my assistants to get hold of four well set-up local men who would be willing to work for us for an hour. The salary was 10 francs, or 60 francs according to present day standards. My assistant soon returned with three of our neighbours, and announced that the fourth was on his way. He was a typical native of Auvergne, a coal heaver by profession, and he had very rightly decided on a wash and brush up before putting in an appearance. When he arrived the other three were already in costume. After five hectic minutes he was also ready to take his place with them, when all of a sudden I heard a roar of laughter.

On looking round I saw that our friend had the royal coat of arms on his back instead of on his chest. I stepped in and explained to him that doublets, in the Middle Ages, buttoned down the back. "Well I'm damned," he replied, "I've never heard of that before; I always do mine up in front. Anyway, how the devil do you expect me to button myself up the back?" This sally increased the general mirth. "Someone will help you," I told him, and in no time the transformation was complete. Taking hold of the halberd, I told him to hold it perfectly straight and not to move a muscle during the take. "Do you understand?" I asked. "Course I do," he replied. "What you mean is 'present arms'. I know, I've been a soldier." "All right, all right," I answered, "we've no time for speeches. Quiet everybody. We're shooting!" The scene went off perfectly, and the four extras didn't stir a muscle, but the story doesn't end there. When everybody had changed I sat down at my desk to pay off my actors, a procedure I had adopted to prevent those in charge of the crowd from taking half or two-thirds of the salary of the unfortunate extras. It so happened that my coal heaver friend was in the queue immediately behind Raiter of the Folies Bergeres, then well known, and the husband of Madame Cocyte, the singer from the Opera Comique. Raiter, who was playing the chief part as the king, got a hundred francs (now worth five or six times as much). As arranged, the



gentleman from Auvergne got ten. To everybody's surprise he went purple with rage. "Blast it all," he shouted "what sort of a trick is this? You give that stuffed owl there a hundred and you only give me ten! It's daylight robbery! All he did was to dress up and undress like me and sit on his chair like a mummy. I won't take it! I'll bring a case!" There was no calming him down, and he stamped off shouting at the top of his voice. The amusing thing was that he kept his word, and a few days later had me before the magistrate. It was excruciatingly funny. The judge had the utmost difficulty in keeping a straight face. He gave judgment against the fellow, made him accept the wages, and ordered him to pay costs. Almost blind with rage, the gentleman from Auvergne left the court bellowing with fury, and damning the whole legal system. After that, to him, the cinema was like a red rag to a bull. "Film people!" he used to say, "Nothing but a lot of thieves and robbers."

And now for another comic episode. It happened in 1901 when I was making my first film of *Joan of Arc*. I made another one later, but this one was limited to 400 feet, an epic in those days! We had very little film at our disposal and were naturally pressed for time. For the siege of Compiègne we had built, in front of the ramparts, a formidable looking palisade, which in reality was only made of light planks, so that it would not offer too much resistance. This palisade was supported by three main posts, one on the left, one on the right and one in the middle of the scene. The posts themselves were firmly fixed and buttressed. I had told off one of the strapping men-at-arms, who was carrying an enormous battle-axe, to break down the centre post, a procedure which should have ensured the collapse of the planks. Contrary to my expectations, my warriors flung themselves on the palisade with such a *furia francese*

that in a second the whole thing was borne down under their weight except for the centre post. We were then entertained to the following comedy. While the rest of the cast were racing for the walls of the town, pulling up ladders and making their assault under a hail of projectiles, the gentleman with the battle axe continued to hack away at the post which was in nobody's way, and in spite of all his efforts, he couldn't dislodge it—it had been too firmly fixed. What an uproar there would have been if we had shown that scene as it was shot! We had to start all over again and put everything back in its place. Naturally I was a little annoyed, and when I pointed out to the man what a fool he had been, he was furious. "What the devil do you mean?" he said, "everybody heard you tell me to knock down the post, and a jolly stiff one, too. I nearly pulled my arms out of their sockets trying to hack it down and you go for me! No more for me, I'm finished!" Everyone burst out laughing, including myself. There was nothing more I could say. We started the scene again, and it was quite a success, but it ended on a comic note. One of the extras, who was extremely fat, had reached the top of the wall, put one leg over the rail of the iron balcony which ran round the top of the studio, and was making desperated efforts to climb on to it, revealing, in the process, to everyone's intense amusement, what Courteline describes as the fleshiest part of his person. I shouted up to him: "Hi, there, Jumbo! We'll get a ladder for you. You can come down, it's all over, and, anyway you might like to know that we do our filming here by sunlight, and not by the light of the moon!"

As a young man I was a caricaturist on the staff of *La Griffie*, an anti-Boulangier paper. Well, there we are, I always had a light heart, and always liked a practical joke, and in growing older I don't think I have changed.



An early photograph showing Georges Méliès directing his company

IS THIS CHARLIE?

H. D. WALEY, *Technical Director of the British Film Institute, explains the mystery surrounding some of Chaplin's early films*

IT MIGHT be imagined that anyone desirous of knowing the names and dates of all the films in which Chaplin appeared would simply have to open a book of reference in order to ascertain the facts. This, however, is not the case with regard to the films which he made for Mack Sennett's Keystone Company during the year 1914.

No two authorities agree either as to their number or names. This curious situation is attributable to the fact that the original Keystone Chaplins were, owing to their popularity, reprinted again and again, sometimes with authority and sometimes without, but always with altered titles. It has thus come about that the Keystone Chaplins which have survived boast an assortment of names which must come near to totalling one hundred. The first problem before anyone who wants to rescue the facts from their present confusion is to ascertain which of these titles are original issue titles. The clearing up of this point carries with it the solution of one all-important question—what was the actual number of Keystone Chaplin films? The method adopted in order to arrive at certainty regarding this was a page by page search of contemporary trade journals for the Keystone Company's announcements of releases.

This search gave the following list, which was used as the basis of the whole investigation:

FILMS IN ORDER OF THEIR RELEASE IN U.K. FOR KEYSTONES

- 1 *Making a Living*
- 2 *Mabel's Strange Predicament*
- 3 *Kid Auto Races*
- 4 *A Thief Catcher*
- 5 *Between Showers*
- 6 *A Film Johnny*
- 7 *His Favourite Pastime*
- 8 *Tango Tangle*
- 9 *Cruel, Cruel, Love*
- 10 *Caught in the Rain*
- 11 *Twenty Minutes of Love*
- 12 *Star Boarder*
- 13 *Caught in a Cabaret*
- 14 *A Busy Day*
- 15 *The Fatal Mallet*
- 16 *Mabel's Busy Day*
- 17 *Mabel's Married Life*
- 18 *Laughing Gas*
- 19 *Face on the Bar-Room Floor*
- 20 *Recreation*
- 21 *The Masquerader*
- 22 *His New Profession*
- 23 *The New Janitor*
- 24 *Those Love Pangs*
- 25 *The Rounders*
- 26 *The Property Man*
- 27 *The Knock-Out*
- 28 *Mabel at the Wheel*
- 29 *His Musical Career*

- 30 *Tillie's Punctured Romance*
- 31 *Getting Acquainted*
- 32 *Gentlemen of Nerve*
- 33 *Dough and Dynamite*
- 34 *His Trysting Place*
- 35 *His Prehistoric Past*.

Titles are, however, rather thin fare on which to satisfy curiosity. The trade journals of the period supplement them, it is true, with synopses of contents, but these tend to be exasperatingly sketchy and throw very little real light on style, merits, or even plot. There is no effective substitute for actually seeing the film.

Accordingly, the British Film Institute determined to undertake an inquiry into the copies of Keystone Chaplins still extant in this country. Two possible sources of information suggested themselves:

- (1) Libraries (substandard and standard).
- (2) Private Collectors.

The survey of the libraries was, of course, a straightforward task, except for the problem of the multiple titles for a single film. The fortunate discovery in the *Bioscope* of 3rd June, 1920, of a table of equivalent titles (a veritable Rosetta Stone!) greatly lightened the labour of tracing each back to its original.

The survey of private collections suffered not only from the multiple title complication, aggravated by the fragmentary condition of many of the films and the deceptive work of imitators, but also from the problem of establishing contact with an indefinite number of individuals scattered throughout the country. In meeting this difficulty, we received invaluable assistance from the B.B.C. and the Press who brought our quest to the notice of a wide public. The results so far achieved may be summarised as follows:

- (a) The Ensign Library contains 14 Keystone Chaplins on 16mm. film.
- (b) The Pathescope Library contains 3 Keystone Chaplins on 9.5mm. film.
- (c) Equity British Library contains 14 Keystone Chaplins on 35mm. film.
- (d) The National Film Library contains 1 Keystone Chaplin on 35mm. film.
- (e) Private Collectors own 14 Keystone Chaplins on 35mm. film.
- (f) Private Collectors own 1 Keystone Chaplin on 9.5mm. film.*

These lists naturally overlap to a great extent and only represent a total of twenty-four distinct films. These are listed below with a reference-letter showing to which of the above categories they belong.

<i>Mabel's Strange Predicament</i>	...	...	...	a d
<i>Kid's Auto Races</i>	...	...	...	e
<i>Between Showers</i>	...	...	...	a b c e
<i>A Film Johnny</i>	...	...	...	e
<i>Caught in the Rain</i>	...	...	...	a c
<i>Star Boarder</i>	...	...	...	a e

* This is an old Pathescope reel no longer listed, and no copies have been traced on 16mm. or 35mm. film.

<i>Caught in a Cabaret</i>	...	...	...	a
<i>The Fatal Mallet</i>	...	...	...	a e
<i>Mabel's Busy Day</i>	...	...	...	a
<i>Mabel's Married Life</i>	...	...	...	a c e
<i>Laughing Gas</i>	...	...	...	a e
<i>Face on the Bar-room Floor</i>	...	...	...	a
<i>The Masquerader</i>	...	...	...	a
<i>New Janitor</i>	...	...	...	e
<i>Those Love Pangs</i>	...	...	...	a
<i>The Rounders</i>	...	...	...	a c
<i>The Property Man</i>	...	...	...	a b c
<i>The Knockout</i>	...	...	...	c e
<i>Mabel at the Wheel</i>	...	...	...	c e
<i>His Musical Career</i>	...	...	...	f
<i>Tillie's Punctured Romance</i>	...	...	...	c e
<i>Getting Acquainted</i>	...	...	...	b e
<i>Dough and Dynamite</i>	...	...	...	e (part only)
<i>His Prehistoric Past</i>	...	...	...	c e

Since the above list was drawn up, the following Keystone Chaplins have been acquired by the National Film Library for preservation:

Kid's Auto Races
Mabel's Married Life
Laughing Gas
Tillie's Punctured Romance (part only)
Getting Acquainted
Dough and Dynamite (part only)
His Prehistoric Past.

It is proposed to build up from these reels a composite two-reel film illustrating the development of Chaplin's acting for circulation in the National Film Library's Loan Section.

If we assume that a fragment showing Chaplin in fancy dress (see illustration) belongs to *Tango Tangle*, on the ground that the scene of this film is stated in a contemporary trade review to have been a fancy dress ball, then the number of Chaplins which we can find no tangible trace of is reduced to ten.

Their titles are as follows:

Making a Living, re-issued as *A Busted Johnny*
A Thief Catcher
His Favourite Pastime, re-issued as *Reckless Fling*



Tillie's Punctured Romance

Cruel, Cruel, Love
Twenty Minutes of Love, re-issued as *The Love Fiend*
A Busy Day, re-issued as *Militant Suffragette*
Recreation
His New Profession, re-issued as *Good for Nothing*
Gentlemen of Nerve
His Trysting Place.

Any information which may lead to the discovery of the whole or part of any of the above films will be gratefully received.



Dough and Dynamite



CAN YOU RECOGNISE THESE PICTURES?

Above: An unknown mystery scene: is this Charlie Chaplin?

Below: Scene from *Tango Tangle* (?)



NIGERIAN NIGHTS

They have just opened the first cinema in Lagos, Nigeria and, writes GORDON F. WOOLLIAMS, "it is perhaps difficult for people in England to realise what a boon this innovation is to those who spend their lives so far from the old country." The author has himself spent three years on the west coast of Africa

THE FIRST real cinema in Lagos, Nigeria, was opened a few months ago. It is an open-air affair and has accommodation for 300-400 people. Picture-goers are provided with cane armchairs and little tables at which refreshments are served. It is open three nights a week for one performance in the grounds of the Glover Hall. Mr. Khalil, the moving spirit of this innovation, hopes to provide alternative seating inside the hall, so that patrons may obtain shelter in case of rain during the wet season. Although this cinema is primarily intended for Europeans and Syrians, those of the more educated Africans who are prepared to pay 3s. 6d., the price of admission, are welcomed.

Originally this was intended as an experiment; but it has proved so popular that its success is now assured. Seats may be reserved, and there are occasions when, not only is the house filled, but people have been unable to obtain admission. It is becoming more and more the fashion to book seats for the entertainment of guests after an early dinner party. Many parties, especially on Saturday, go on from there to a dance at one of the clubs. On numerous occasions the cinema has been honoured by the presence of high Government officials, including the Governor, His Excellency Sir Bernard Bourdillon.

It is perhaps difficult for people in England to realise what a boon this innovation is to those who spend their lives so far from the old country. After night-fall, which varies between 6.30 and 7 p.m. in these latitudes, there are no amusements outside the sphere of club life, apart from an occasional concert or amateur dramatics. Europeans therefore find a double interest in the cinema as, apart from its entertainment value, it provides an almost tangible contact with civilisation. News films in particular have a wide appeal.

POSSIBILITIES OF EXTENSION

So much for the inception of the idea. It is a private venture with little or no capital behind it. To anyone prepared to enter this field with the necessary financial support, the opportunities are vast and the prospects particularly bright. Let me give a few figures.

Lagos, the political and economic capital of Nigeria, is a town with a population of some hundred thousand, of whom about fifteen hundred are Europeans and Syrians. The remainder are Africans, representing many of the three hundred odd dialects and tongues of the country. Nearly all, however, have some knowledge of Pidgin English, the *lingua franca* of "the Coast", while the better educated clerks employed by the Government and the big firms have a good working knowledge of English.

These represent a fair proportion of the population of the metropolis.

CHILDLIKE CURIOSITY

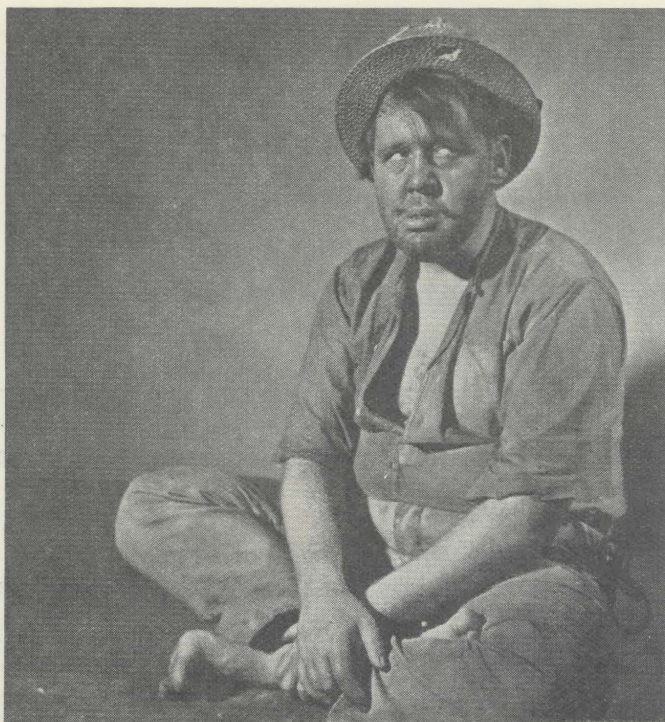
Dealing for the moment with Lagos alone, the problem is to reach the native element and make it picture-minded. An understanding of the mentality of the prospective audiences will help to point out the solution. The keynote is a child-like curiosity. Remember that it is less than two generations since the natives of what is now the capital of our largest Crown Colony, were complete savages, with centuries of bloodthirsty internecine warfare behind them. To-day the British régime has stamped that out, but there remains the natural inquisitiveness peculiar to all primitive races. They are easily stirred, love the colourful, the exciting and the humorous. It is safe to predict that the introduction of films would make an immediate appeal to the masses. Films must be carefully selected with the native mentality well in mind, and also pass the eye of a censor keen to detect any element calculated to stir up racial feeling or deflate the prestige of the European.

A vigorous propaganda, which should be conducted in Yoruba, the principle language of the Lagocians, as well as English should bring a large response provided prices are kept low. The native will not expect luxurious seats—he will be quite happy on a wooden bench!

Nigeria has a population of twenty-two million. In addition to the capital, there are a number of other towns where cinemas might be established profitably, notably at Ibadan, which is said to have the second largest native population in Africa, Kano, Port Harcourt, Jos, Zaria and Ebute Metta. In the Gold Coast, apart from Accra, the capital, there are Kumasi and Sekondi. Freetown in Sierra Leone is also an important station, boasting the highest general standard of education in West Africa.

The Coast is no longer the White Man's Grave. As a result of wise administration, medical science has made tremendous strides, and Lagos has won the Empire Health Week Shield for two years in succession! The prospective cinema organiser, therefore, has no need to fear. To-day, he is as safe in West Africa as in Oxford Circus.

There appears to be no reason why the film industry cannot extend its activities to West Africa just as it has done to the West Indies and British Guiana. Georgetown, the capital of the latter Colony, has a population comparable with that of Lagos, and manages to support four large and flourishing cinemas. The black man as well as the white, has a pocket; why not give him entertainment in exchange for his money?



Pommer-Laughton



Paramount

"The Beachcomber" and "The Buccaneer"

VILLAINS, HEROES AND HOBGOBLINS

By ARTHUR VESSELO

I HAPPENED, at the Press performance of *The Buccaneer*, to be placed next to a fashionably-attired young woman (no companion of mine) who paid tribute to Cecil B. De Mille's showmanship by giving unrestrained vent to her emotions. Such expressions as "Oh! Oh!" "Dirty dog!" "The swine!" flowed in impulsive undertones from her lips. My first feeling was a pardonable annoyance at having someone else's reactions thus foisted upon me; but it was succeeded by a more detached interest. For the indignation which she voiced was not, as might be imagined, directed against the pirates with whose exploits the film was concerned, but, in every instance, against their enemies, the theoretical upholders of law and order. When the bulbous-nosed Akim Tamiroff was rudely deprived of his medals, she fulminated; when he took them back, she displayed immeasurable disappointment because he failed suitably to revenge himself.

The young woman's thoroughgoing advocacy of the bloodthirsty and anti-social only showed that De Mille had achieved his aim—to present acknowledged villainy in an attractive light. And indeed, the romanticisation of the courtesan and the killer are commonplaces of the screen. But the method adopted deserves further examination. The heroic film-villain is portrayed in the main as a villain only in the abstract: his evil-doings are masked, and represented in terms of "ruthlessness," "a law unto himself," and so on—vague conceptual qualities which it is easy to fall into the way of admiring if once they can be dissociated from particular acts. Thus the killer, his brutality and murderous instincts having been subtly veiled over, becomes a noble figure, for some airy reason or other a killer despite himself; and in the same way the

courtesan is often put forward as a courtesan in little more than name.

Jean Lafitte in the film is just such a heroic character, represented by the handsome Fredric March in a thin disguise and with a spurious French accent (the fruits, we are informed, of three months' special study of the French language): a man whose major depredations are all completely off-screen, who is never shown visibly to kill except on the sternest provocation, and who is finally driven into exile for a crime committed not by himself but, conveniently, by one of his subordinates. In the scenes, therefore, where he emotionally confesses his own unworthiness, all he does is to add to our sympathy for him, since we remain unconvinced that actions which we have not seen, and which are out of temper with his character as depicted, could ever really have taken place.

In another but closely-allied category is the genial scoundrel, as popularly expounded by Wallace Beery. In *The Bad Man of Brimstone*, recently shown, he is made to commit one particularly callous murder, which is, however, elaborately glossed over: firstly, by being set out of range of the camera, so that we only hear what is going on; secondly, by the fact that the victim is as worthless as his murderer (although we have no reason to think that the latter would have weighed this point very carefully); thirdly, by the fact that Beery immediately "expiates" his crime by being knocked about by his boxer-son. In the same film Beery describes, with immense gusto, the tortures with which he despatched an enemy. The audience, knowing what he says to be untrue, laughs appreciatively; yet the account is untrue only, as it were, by accident, and many factors suggest that the narrator is describing something

which he would not have hesitated, in other circumstances, to put into practice.

This wholesale whitewashing of villainy arises from a clash of two contrary instincts, a clash whose implications go far beyond any question of films alone. Throughout the whole period of modern European history, from the middle days of the Roman Empire onwards, two mutually contradictory moral codes have existed in the Western World side by side. The one is the fundamental moral code of religious ethics, the other is the old barbaric code exalting might, aggrandisement and bloodshed. It may seem strange on first sight that the second should be referred to as a "moral code", but it has formed the perpetual mainspring of all international and much private action, has provided the chief criteria of popular "greatness" (Alexander the Great, Peter the Great, Frederick the Great) and has lately been established once more as a conscious standard of internal and external activity in certain powerful European countries. The other has largely been relegated to the status of an impracticable "ideal" code: nevertheless, its own inward energy makes it very difficult to deny, and the result is seen in the sort of films we are discussing, where the ancient code, while dominant, is obscured and watered down in uneasy deference to the new.

The same principle is found to operate elsewhere. Thus we look back to the Vikings as supermen, and to say that a man is like a Viking is to speak of him in the most complimentary way possible; but the real meaning of the word has been concealed from us by the overgrown glamour of centuries. Egil Skalle-Grimsson, Iceland's national hero, is recorded in the sagas as a figure of the most barbaric cruelty and ferocity, who started his career with the murder of a playmate at the age of seven, and who later cheerfully gouged a man's eye out in the presence of the latter's wife and child. Again, it is claimed by Leaf that the Greeks who collected and revised the Iliad at the time of Peisistratus were ashamed of such nakedly brutal tales as that of the dragging of Hector's body round the walls of

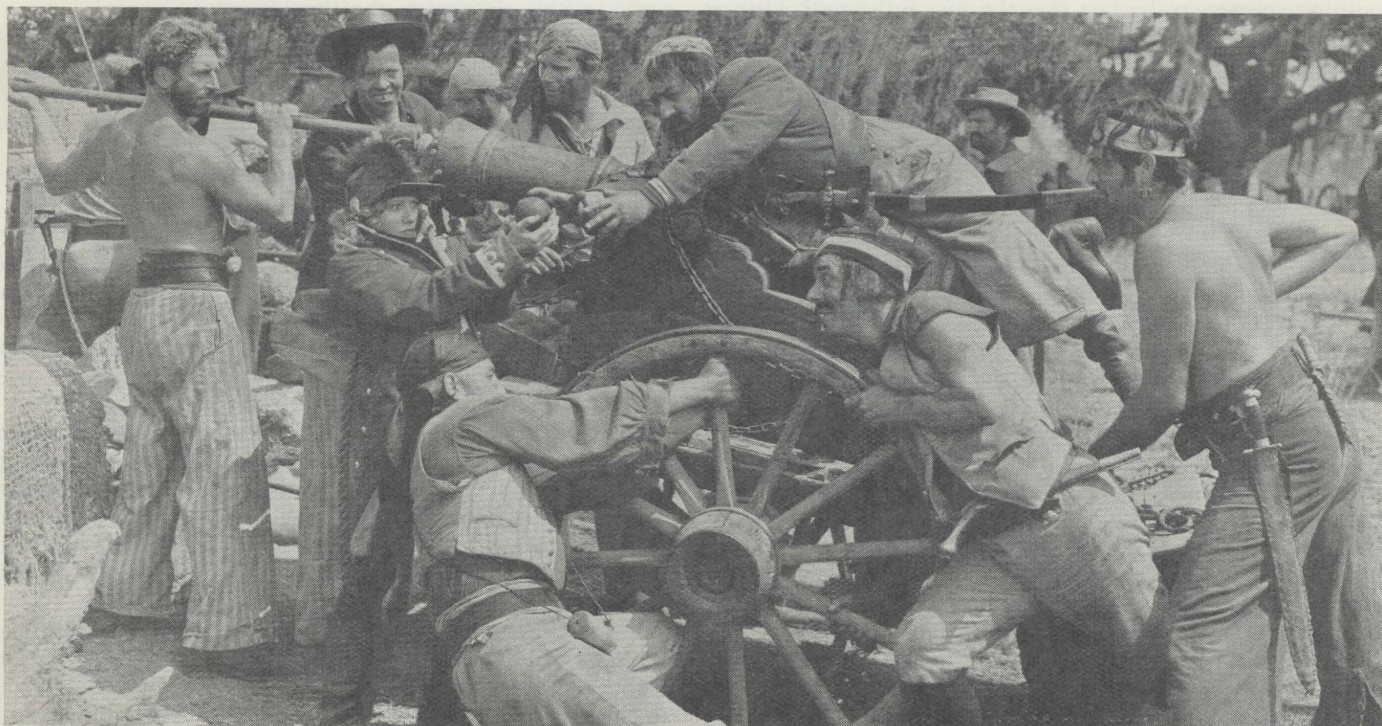


Bad Man of Brimstone

M.G.M.

Troy by Achilles, and did their best to make them read more mildly. This compromise, this vacillation between opposite ideals, appears to be a normal characteristic of a certain stage of civilisation.

It would be unwise, however, to regard our leanings towards the dark and earthy as being indications merely of original sin, for there are points at which they depart from the region of moral judgment: their aspect then is a purely æsthetic one. The storm-wind, the lowering sky, the tempestuous sea, are in no sense objects of moral scrutiny, and our basic community with the forces of Nature impels us to admire their grandeur. From here it is but a step, though a dangerous one, to admiring the same qualities in primitive man. Confusion comes ultimately when we misinterpret "admire" as meaning "imitate"—a perversion



The Buccaneer

Paramount

of non-human, non-moral laws of functioning into an evil criterion for conscious moral behaviour.

The æsthetic value of the subterranean and the macabre, when divested of illusory sentimental trappings, is demonstrated by the important place which these elements find for themselves in great art, particularly perhaps in literature. As for the screen, their influence in this sphere, though often enough in adulterated guise, needs little emphasis. But it is significant that at the one point where the screen does seem to approach imaginative genius—that is to say in the Disney cartoons—the macabre, the grotesque, the terrifying, are present in their purest form. They are very nearly the whole essence of Disney's true creative power.

It is odd that in the controversy aroused by the censor's classification of *Snow-White* as an "A" film, the fact above-mentioned should have been left almost out of account. The controversy has in any case been mainly a matter of prejudged issues and unsupported generalisations; and as somebody has had the perception to point out, to talk of "children" as a single homogeneous class is absurd. There are younger children and older children, more sensitive and less sensitive, and while it is quite possible that a majority will be unaffected by the terrifying passages in *Snow-White*, it is also undeniable that those who *will* be affected make up a most important minority.

But what very few apparently understand is that the macabre is in no way an accidental part of Disney's work. It is, as I have suggested, its essence. The common view of the cartoons conceives of them as pretty little tale-spinnings for infants, but treated so cleverly that adults also can enjoy them. This is a fantastic misconception. Everybody must have noted that when Disney does in fact concentrate on the pretty and charming, he merely descends into feebleness. At his most powerful he aims, consciously or unconsciously, not at the minds of children, but at the elemental nature of grown men; and it is his contact with children's minds which is accidental (though inevitable) and not the other way about. There is fundamentally nothing strange in the fact that the first full-length Disney should have compelled the censor to ponder on the darker aspects of the author's imagination: what is strange, rather, is that the problem has never arisen before. It is relevant to observe that the first of all the Silly Symphonies, *Skeleton Dance* (now in the National Film Library), is an essay in the macabre pure and simple.

The literary fairy-tale, too (better thought of as a reconstructed folk-tale), wherever it comes near to greatness shows similar tendencies; and there are for that matter several which, going further, uphold the same outspoken code of treachery and violence as the sagas. There have also been great works never in the slightest degree intended for children which have suffered through being misinterpreted by popular opinion. Spenser's *Faerie Queene* is frequently pooh-poohed as containing nothing but dainty trivialities; but one can only suppose that this is because its detractors, professing an up-to-date sophistication, are naïvely embarrassed at the word "faerie" in the title and refuse to pursue the subject further. Actually *The Faerie Queene*, whatever its structural defects, is concerned not with playful fancies but with a resolute exploration into the bizarre and twilit profundities of the mind. Nor does Spenser hold his hand from a rendering of the unequivocally fierce.

In films, outside the other-worldly plane of the cartoon, the sinister, when not directly romanticised, has generally

either been exaggerated into caricature or coarsened by an obvious appeal to audience-sadism. Realistic villainy in its proper dramatic place is cathartic: it is also rare. One of its best exponents of earlier days, before his fame was usurped by his now better-known brother, was Noah Beery; who in the sound-version of *Tol'able David*, for example, produced for us a crafty, semi-demented sub-type—the creature of no predetermined formula—of whose portrayal the psychological accuracy appeared overwhelming.

I once spoke to Beery himself about this, but his views were disappointing, for his private preference was for the rôle of the "tough guy" with a soft spot. But that was at a time when his brother had already taken his place in the public eye; and perhaps therefore the preference was partially a wistful recognition of the fully-demonstrated sentimental heart of the box-office.

I chose to begin this discussion with *The Buccaneer*, and with the same let me end it: not, however, with *The Buccaneer* himself, the upstanding March-Lafitte, mouth-ing his gauche French-English, but with another and more impressively-drawn character, in solidity and vigour indeed by far the most convincing personality in the film—the uncouth, forthright, entirely American Andrew Jackson. Here at last is the real thing, one thought on seeing it, and was immensely grateful to Hugh Sothern for the relief.

In any estimate of the film's authenticity this is important, for the rough-hewn General Jackson, afterwards twice President of the United States, is the biggest historical figure brought on to the scene. Beside him Jean Lafitte, whom the ordinary histories do not even mention, dwindles to nothing. And whereas Lafitte has had one film to himself, Jackson bulked large also in *The Gorgeous Hussy* (where he was played by Lionel Barrymore), and may appear yet in half-a-hundred others.

What, then, do the standard history-books say of Jackson? Their verdict, after the wholly attractive picture drawn by both Sothern and Barrymore, is startling. Here are some quite typical extracts, the first of which relates to the period of his election to the Presidency:

Apart from his military achievements, his previous career was associated with nothing but despotic violence, and high-handed acts of oppression. There was but too much ground for regarding him as an adulator of the mob for the sake of popularity.

... a dictator who could imprison a judge on his own authority, who could hang a foreigner for his own convenience, who could seize a province at his own bidding, who could govern a Territory as if it were a gaol, and the next moment flatter the crowd as if it were the nation. . . .

He was perpetually engaged in altercations, assaults, and duels. Almost to the close of his existence, he was always quarrelling with and reviling someone.

Elsewhere, Jackson is justly described among other things as "a bully". Thus the delineation given us by Hugh Sothern, excellent within the limits of his script, turns out in the end (whatever his original's saving graces) to be little less fictional than the portrait of Lafitte—and in its own way just as much of an offence against reality, though the offence is in this case much less obvious.

The rigid and one-sided selectivity, the deceptive simplifications, of which the screen, aided by a persuasive technique, is capable, appear in these and similar contexts to find their apotheosis. And good and evil, heroism and villainy, remain inextricably confused.

I HATE THE FILMS!

Few people dislike the films more than J. C. TREWIN, journalist, dramatic critic and lover of Shakespeare. In this entertaining and outspoken article he gives his reasons

I HATE the films—their ostentation and their emptiness, their obviousness and their trickery, their blare and bravado, their pathetic futility.

I hate the Super-Spectacle. I hate the Emotional Drama I hate the Raving Farce. Most of all, I hate the films that, setting out to challenge the stage, succeed only in mutilating and cheapening the great plays of the world.

Years ago, long before Hollywood and Elstree discovered the name of William Shakespeare, I remember hearing an ardent theorist speaking of a film *Macbeth*.

"Think of it", he told his audience in effect. "Think of it. The battle scenes, the storm on the Blasted Heath, Duncan's arrival at Inverness, the scene at the feast on the night before the murder. . . . Why, on the screen, we should see the story in its full splendour. Just think of the lines:

*"And Duncan's horses—a thing most strange and certain—
Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,
Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make
War with mankind.*

'Tis said they eat each other.

"Imagine that on the screen. . . . No need for words. The film would show it all."

I regret to say that the speech was applauded.

In recent years I have remembered it often. The three Shakespeare films, the *Dream*, *As You Like It* and *Romeo and Juliet* could all have been produced under the title, *Duncan's Horses*; or, *No Need for Words*.

Personally, I would have preferred even the kind of De-Million Dollar spectacle that confuses the life and times of Boadicea with Cup Final Day at Wembley. On seeing *Romeo and Juliet* I could only exclaim, with the Prologue from another play:

*. . . in a moment, see
How soon this mightiness meets misery:
And if you can be merry then, I'll say
A man may weep upon his wedding-day.*

Romeo, undoubtedly, was intended to show the cinema as a major art. The man Shakespeare had had a promising idea. He had treated it clumsily. Very well. The film-makers who "show it all" would tell him where his error lay. They would tell him how Boy Met Girl at Verona. They would add a piece here, cut another there, snip and slash, juggle with the camera, turn the Cinquecento gallant, Mercutio, into a noisy brawler and the Nurse into a Hollywood character woman. This would save the play; the author would rise and call them blessed.

So the wings of the verse were clipped until the play could soar no longer. The tragedy became one more Spectacular Drama With A Huge Cast. Only the voices of Mr. Leslie Howard and Mr. Basil Rathbone reminded us occasionally that here was the matchless flowering of the Shakespearean spring.

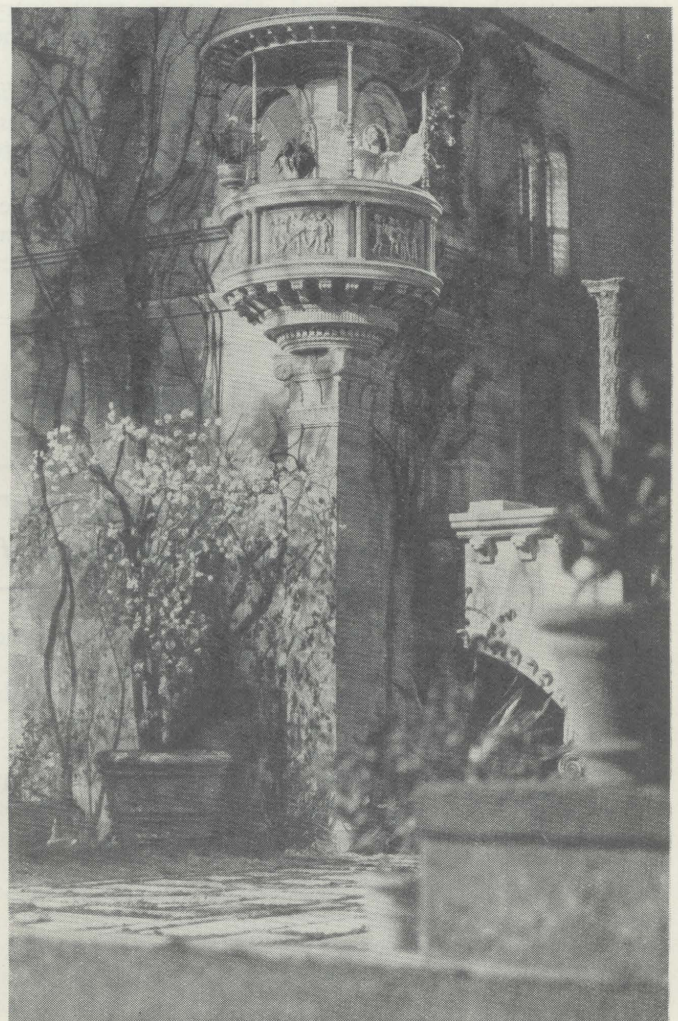
The film, in short, was characteristic—it had as much subtlety as an electric sign. The cinema cannot whisper.

It rarely speaks in a normal tone. It bellows through a megaphone. Leather-lunged, blue in the face, it insists that this or that is the greatest production the world has known. And while it is storming at us in the voice of a fair-ground "barker", it wonders why more people will not accept it as an art.

The art to end all arts? Maybe.

Ten years ago I saw a performance of *Romeo and Juliet* in a West Country theatre. The players were unknown, the scenery might have cost a five-pound note; and the production was perhaps one hundred times as satisfying as Hollywood's. The verse had been left to speak for itself and to create Verona in our minds.

The film, alas, was concerned not so much with the white



Romeo and Juliet

"Wedding Cake Balcony"

M.G.M.

wonder of dear Juliet's hand as with the white wonder of her wedding-cake balcony. One remembered the mock recipe beginning: "Take a dozen ripe peaches, peel, pare finely, garnish with parsley, serve on a silver dish and throw away."

I will not speak here of the Midsummer Nightmare that Hollywood called the *Dream*. The third of the Shakespeare films was the British-made *As You Like It*. Let me quote from my diary, written on the morning after seeing the film:

"Well, what do I remember? Elisabeth Bergner as the archest, most infuriating kind of Rosalind-Pan. A flock of sheep. Another flock of sheep. The voice of Henry Ainley. Laurence Olivier's Orlando stopped at every turn by this coy and romping Rosalind with fairies at the bottom of her Arden. . . .

"What else? A sugary, tea-gardenish, Epping-on-Bank-Holiday setting, an over-populated forest, tragic cuts. I missed '... fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden world', Le Beau's 'Hereafter, in a better world than this', Celia's 'Juno's swans'. There was no joy, no spontaneity in this Arden, for Rosalind's spirit was not there".

I have mentioned the Shakespeare films because they show clearly where ambition has overleaped itself. But the cinema is no happier when it leaves its astigmatic peering at the heights. Think only of the novels that have been ruined, the plots that have been mishandled, the characterisation that has been distorted. The cinema treats every plot as Gilbert's auctioneer and land-agent treated the lady-bird—it "rends it asunder".

Remember what Hollywood did to Kipling's *Wee Willie Winkie*. Remember the grandiose failure that was *Lost Horizon*. Remember the lamentable attempt to translate even so familiar a friend as Rider Haggard's *She*.

The cinema must tinker and tamper. It must re-write. Nothing will stop it. And so Ayesha the ageless was taken from Africa to reign, very uncomfortably, in a Never-Never

Land in the Arctic Circle, with a bodyguard of Graeco-Roman soldiers, some semi-Egyptian guards, cabaret-dancers, an American accent, and—here listen to the authentic tones of Hollywood—"Tanya Dugmore, a waif" with tears of glycerine poised permanently on each cheek. The book was no more than a fantastic adventure, but how surprised Rider Haggard would have been at its metamorphosis!

Need I speak of the fantastic excursions into history—Mr. de Mille's conducted tour of the Crusades via Los Angeles, or another director's tale of the life and death of *Mary, Queen of Scots*? Or of the dolorous farces? The saccharine-and-slapstick comedies? The work of the higher intellectuals which makes me reflect that one minute of any Tchekov play is worth all the "damnable iteration" of every Russian (or French) film in cinema history?

The cinema has no background. It lacks the true flame of personality, the surge of inspiration, the quickening contact with the audience. It does not know what imagination means. It thinks of a number, doubles it, trebles it, and implores us to remember that this is art. It has the persistence of a spoilt and hysterical child, and it needs to be smacked severely and told that, one day, if it takes itself in hand, it may grow up.

No doubt this expensive game with scissors and paste has its possibilities; but until the child does grow up it cannot be mentioned in the same room with the art of the theatre. I would rather see an amateur production in a village hall than the most lavish Hollywooden spectacle yet conceived, or the most lugubrious epic from the shores of the Volga.

One day there may be less pretentiousness and less vulgarity, more thought and less reliance on the big drum, more acting and less facile exhibitionism. There may even be art.

I hope so. In the meantime, I hate the films.

A MEASURE FOR OPTIMISTS

The new Films Act analysed by H. FORSYTH HARDY, who considers that it offers "very much the same kind of protection as did the old"

ON APRIL 1st, the Cinematograph Films Act (1938) came into effect. True to form, its passage was uneasy and eventful to the end. With only a day to spare, the House of Lords agreed not to press their amendments which had been rejected by the Commons. It has not been a happy measure. When the text of the Bill was published last October, it was met with criticism from all sections of the industry, and the resultant internal wrangling was a persistent handicap in the preparation of legislation. A change in the Presidency of the Board of Trade also could not have contributed to the smooth passage of the measure, and Mr. Oliver Stanley was unable, through illness, to be present at the Report stage in the Commons to defend the terms of the Bill. Nor did the measure have an attractive background—closed British producing studios and unemployed technicians. These depressed conditions were the outcome, not of the failure of the system of protection, but of the exaggerated boom of

1936, the accompanying squandermania and the consequent withdrawal of finance. With a less abnormal and misleading background, the framing of legislation would have been easier.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

In its general principles, the Act follows not so much the recommendations of the Moyne Committee as the original proposals of the Board of Trade. All attempts to embody in the measure the Committee's main recommendation—that the industry should be placed under the direct and active influence of an independent Film Commission representing primarily the national interest—have failed. In its place is a Films Council (replacing the former Advisory Committee), consisting of twenty-one members, eleven independent of the industry and the remaining ten representing the various

sections of the trade. The Council's powers are limited: it may advise the Government and make recommendations to the Board of Trade. Clearly such a body cannot have the co-ordinating and stabilising influence envisaged by the Moyne Committee. With the abandonment of this project, there goes, too, the conception of constructive control for what is both an industry as such—a means of employment and a potential source of profit—and a major influence on the life and outlook of the people. The latter surely provides the basic justification for the protection of British films.

The other fundamental divergence from the Moyne Report is the substitution of a cost for a quality test. It is maintained that, when the total labour costs must be not less than £7,500, the "quota quickie" will be eliminated. An objection to the cost test—that it will bear harshly on the independent producer who, without renting and exhibiting alliances, is unable to risk £15,000—has been partially removed by the introduction of a clause whereby a film costing less than the minimum may be accepted as renters' quota on the ground of its "special exhibition value". It should also be noted that the Board of Trade may ask Parliament for powers to reject films which comply with the financial and other conditions if the Board is satisfied that they have insufficient value for purposes of entertainment.

THE ACT IN DETAIL

These broad considerations defined, the clauses of the Act may be described in greater detail. (A full survey of the Act is, of course, not attempted.)

Quota Percentages.—Renters in the first year of the Act must fulfil a quota of 15 per cent for long films (over 3,000 feet) and a separate quota of 15 per cent on shorts. In 1939 the quota for long films will be 20 per cent and it will rise by gradual stages to a maximum of 30 per cent in 1946 and 1947. The quota for short films will be 17½ per cent in 1940, and will increase gradually to 25 per cent in 1946 and 1947.

In the case of exhibitors, a reduction of 5 per cent has been made in the 20 per cent quota for the current year. The exhibitors' commitments commence on October 1st. In the first year the quota for long films is 12½ per cent and in 1939, 15 per cent, and it will be gradually increased to 25 per cent in 1946 and 1947. The quota for short films begins at 12½ per cent and rises to 22½ per cent in 1946 and 1947.

Double and Treble Quotas.—The renter may fulfil his quota obligations in a variety of ways. By incurring higher expenditure, he may reduce the footage he must acquire. To register as double quota, a film must have incurred an expenditure of not less than £22,500 labour costs, while a film whose labour costs are £37,500 may count as three for quota purposes. There is a clause giving the Board of Trade power to disregard items of labour costs when it appears that a sum is so great as not to be a *bona fide* remuneration. As a further safeguard, the Board may, after consultation with the Films Council and subject to endorsement by both Houses of Parliament, either abolish the treble quota provisions entirely or, alternatively, waive or vary the footage stipulations.

Reciprocity.—The reciprocity clause provides the renter with another method of meeting his quota. Under this clause, any film registered as double quota, but not registered for renters' quota in this country, acquired by a foreign renter for distribution abroad for a sum of not less

than £20,000, may count once for renters' quota. Similarly, a treble quota film, acquired for distribution abroad and costing the foreign renter not less than £30,000, will count twice for renters' quota.

Exhibitors.—For the exhibitor the quota provisions are, by comparison, simple. All British films, including films from any country in the Empire, count as exhibitors' quota. (Empire films may not be registered as renters' quota.) Exhibitors are not affected by double or triple length provisions. All films, whatever their length, count as quota only to the extent of their registered length. The Board of Trade has power to alter quotas (both exhibitors' and renters') by order, and commitments will be reviewed at three-yearly intervals. Restrictions on blind and block booking are stiffened. Only renters may be prosecuted in this connection, the maximum fine being £250.

Shorts.—In contrast to the 1927 Act, shorts are reckoned separately from features. Shorts count only their registered length for both renters and exhibitors. There are no cost clause provisions for shorts.

Exemptions.—Registration under the Act applies to all films, except news-reels, commercial advertisements and films certified by the Board of Education "as being entitled to exemption from customs duty under the convention for facilitating the circulation of films of an educational character". Special exemption is provided for films with a limited demand. A film not shown at more than twelve cinemas in Great Britain, or more than six in the County of London, or which is not shown to the public at more than one cinema on the same day, is exempt from off-setting the footage of the film by a British quota commitment.

"VERY MUCH THE SAME"

These, in summarised form, are the main provisions of the Act. At the time of writing, it is too early to say with any certainty how they will affect the industry. On the positive side, the "quota quickie" is eliminated; the American renter is encouraged to sponsor and/or rent more expensive pictures, in the belief that he will not spend money on rubbish; the interests of the major British producers are met by the reciprocity scheme which will secure American circulation for their films—something they have been unable to gain on merit; and the interests of the shorts producers are recognised in a more generous way than they anticipated.

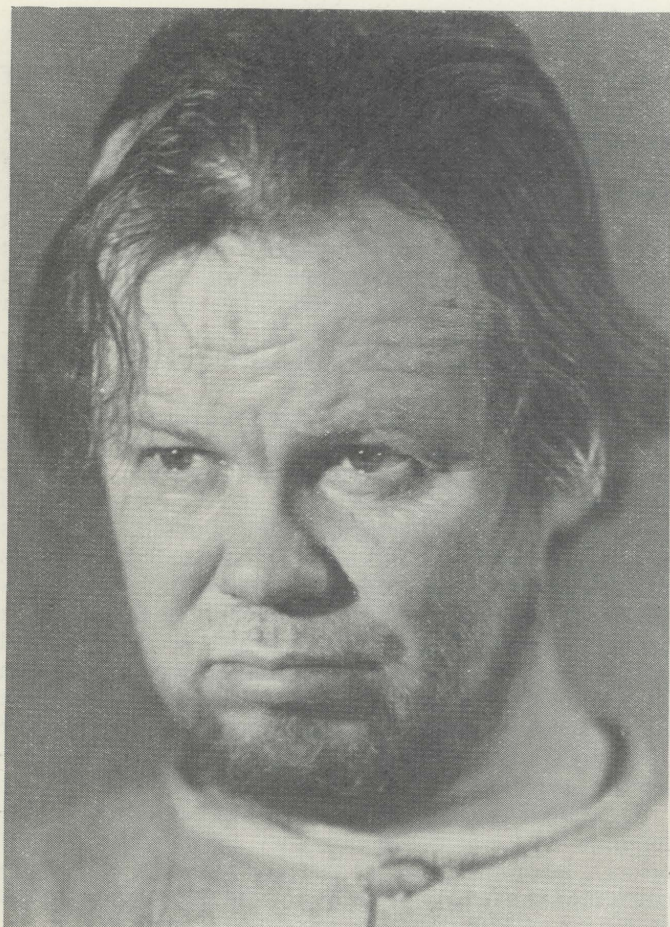
Criticism of the Act is not lacking. Independent exhibitors feel that its terms will bear harshly on them. Double and treble quotas and reciprocity will combine to reduce the available supply of British films; and the cost clause will have the effect of limiting the importation of secondary films from the United States on which the independent exhibitors rely. Many exhibitors dislike the separate quota for shorts and declare that they will defeat the object of the provision by not showing any, American or British. Technicians feel that the cost clauses and reciprocity will mean fewer British films and less employment. Those who want to see the British scene and character reflected on the screen assume that they are unlikely to find those qualities in films sponsored by Americans.

Some of those fears may not be justified. Other shortcomings—and other benefits—may appear in time. At present, however, it seems that the new Act offers very much the same kind of protection as did the old, and that its provisions will not transform the British Cinema.



Aho and Soldan

THE LAND CLOSED WITH SEVEN SEALS



What do we know of Finland, nation of the Northern Lights? Mr. FRIEDRICH EGE describes some of the difficulties encountered in this small, independent, country. . . .

FINLAND, land of the Northern Lights and a sparse, independent people, is at last developing a film industry of her own.

Although the first Finnish film was produced as long ago as 1921, it is only within the last two years that any real attempt has been made to rival the quality of the imported films which, until now, have almost monopolised the country's 274 cinemas. And even at the present time, as a result of Finland's small resources—her population is only 3,670,000—the average cost of a Finnish feature film is barely 600,000 to 800,000 *Markkas* or, roughly, between £3,000 and £4,000!

In spite of this handicap, however, some films have been made which have proved extremely popular not only in Finland but throughout Scandinavia. Among these are *The Bride of the Logdriver*, notable for some fine shots of lumbering and the floating of timber down the rapid running Finnish rivers; *The Struggle about Heikkila House*, a story of peasant life by Johannes Linnankoski; *Hulda from Juurakko*, the first Finnish dialogue comedy; the adaptation for the screen of Sillanpaa's novel *Silja* (The Maid), in which appears Finland's most popular "star", Regina Linnanheimo; and, last but not least, *The Women from Niskavuori*, directed by V. Vaala.

The latter picture may perhaps be taken as a typical example of modern Finnish production. Its star, Sirkka Sari, is a young girl making her first appearance on the screen and she has seized her opportunity with open hands. Another important part is also played by an old woman who had never acted before in her life. There is, in fact, in practically all Finns an innate love and instinct for acting which expresses spontaneously in all their films.

As only 21 per cent of the population live in the towns, the problem of catering for the remaining 79 per cent is difficult. An attempt has been made, however, by the provision of nineteen "ambulatory cinemas" or cinema vans, some of which use sub-standard stock, to give performances in outlying districts. You can picture one of these "ambulatory cinemas" in the far North, surrounded by people who have come many miles to see the show.

The educational film on sub-standard stock was introduced into Finland in 1931. Such films are mainly produced by one Company, Suomi-Filmi, and are quite extensively used in workmen's institutes, high schools and at meetings of co-operative societies, temperance workers, agricultural federations, etc.

Naturally, however, the great majority of films shown in Finland are still foreign; of these, America has a huge lead with 146 films shown in 1937 as against Germany's next best of 30. Then follow France, with 21, Great Britain and Austria with 19 apiece and Sweden with 15. French films are extremely popular in the towns, but America is omnipotent in the provinces. English films are not much appreciated, as the average Finn, in common with much of the rest of the world, fails utterly to understand English ideas of humour.

The Finnish film, as it gradually spreads abroad, will be particularly interesting to foreign countries since it will bring to them a glimpse of life in the North. To most people Finland is a book closed with seven seals. How

many of you know anything of the Finnish people, their life and character, their hard struggle for existence in their wild country? But the Finnish film tells us about it: about the unique highway from the Northern Polar circle over 531 km. through Lapland to the Arctic Sea, about the winter fishers, about the work of the ice-breakers, about the "shipomnibus" from the Aland Isles, about all the life of this sturdy, independent republic.

Steadily, rapidly, the film in Finland is approaching the quality of other producing countries. Already, as has been stated, some pictures have been made fit for international circulation because of their power, their primitive character and the naturalness and form of the Finnish world. Further, the Finnish film is a vivid illustration of the twenty-years-old independency of the country—of the perseverance, the energy and the restless struggle of the young Finnish State to produce with its own means and in its own way something of the character and the heart of Finland.

SOME STATISTICS

Population: 3,670,000.

Cinemas: December 31st, 1936, 226 (about 60,000 seats)

December 31st, 1937, 274 (about 78,000 seats)

Helsinki, the capital, has 42 theatres with 16,092 seats catering for a population of 280,000.

Finnish Films produced: In 1936 ... 9

In 1937 ... 13

Films imported in 1937 totalled 258, divided as follows:

America, 146; Germany, 30; France, 21; Great Britain and Austria, 19 each; Sweden, 15; Czechoslovakia and Russia, 3 each; Hungary and Italy, 1 each.

Censorship: All films must be presented to a Board of Censors (Valtion Filmitarkastamo). If a certificate is refused an appeal may be made to a higher body, the Filmiteknillinen Lautakunta, whose decision is final.



Aho and Soldan



The Hurricane

United Artists

SNOW WHITE AND FIERY RED

Entertainment Films reviewed by ALAN PAGE

THE EVENT of the quarter has been the arrival of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. It has been unanimously hailed as a masterpiece, booked for an indefinite run at a West End cinema, serialised in a newspaper and broadcast. In fact it has been a success. There now remains little to be said about it. Its weakness lies in its human characters; its chief cause for argument arises from the granting of an "A" certificate.

The trouble with Snow White, the Prince, the Wicked Queen and the soldier is not so much their pictorial presentation as their lack of character. They certainly have as much character as many flesh-and-blood film figures, but beside the dwarfs and the animals they seem to lack urgency. Snow White is sweet and good and kind, the Prince is romantic, the soldier is burly and golden-hearted and the Wicked Queen is every inch a Hecate. Perhaps we should have more sympathy with them if they were funny, but if the fairy-story atmosphere is to be preserved, that is right out of the question. The animation of these characters is the least successful, too. But although their movements are jerky, they are marvellously complete and life-like, and I remember in particular the lovely graceful movement of the Wicked Queen as she sweeps down the dungeon stairs.

The story, I think, is chiefly to blame for the doubts about the human characters. It is after all a very simple fairy tale, charming and virtue-triumphant. Disney has interpreted the spirit of the fairy tale very beautifully and has made this part of the film especially for the children.

The animals, and particularly the dwarfs, are primarily

for the adults. The animals he has done before but never has he made them so enchanting and so strangely moving. As for the dwarfs, they are to my mind the triumph of the film. Each one of them has a complete and different character. Their weaknesses endear them to you and their united strength makes you cheer. It is curious to see in them likenesses to some of the Hollywood stars. There is a touch of Harpo Marx in Dopey and a suspicion of Hugh Herbert in Doc.

THAT "A" CERTIFICATE

As for that "A" certificate, the Censor had to take the precaution. In any case I cannot see that it will make much difference, because no parent or uncle or aunt is likely to want to miss the film and send the children to it alone. There are some things in it which would certainly frighten children if they went to see it alone and other things which may frighten them even with a reassuring grown-up companion. The changing of the Queen from a beautiful woman into a frightful hag has been mostly done off-screen, but even so it might cause some tense moments, while the ghoulish vultures that accompany the Witch on her way to Snow White in anticipation of a human meal and later transfer their hopes to the Witch herself when she is fleeing to her doom, are horribly sinister.

Looking back on the film now the scenes that linger in my memory are all those in the dwarfs' house, the wishing-well scene at the beginning, Snow White's discovery that all the things which frightened her in the forest at night were

really only the friendly animals, and the animals' grief at Snow White's death. And the scene in the diamond mine. And the wash-tub scene . . . in fact there is very little that one does not remember with pleasure and affection.

It seems a pity that Disney should have created the dwarfs for only one film. One would like to see them all again in a series of shorts—seven, perhaps, starring each one in turn as the hero of an adventure that would befall them all. And yet they are probably best left alone with Snow White, for without her they might lose some of their purpose and their appeal.

Certainly Disney has proved that a full-length cartoon is commercially and artistically practical. If he can perfect his technique with the human figures he can take his choice from the whole of Grimm and Hans Andersen.

SOME REVIVALS

When one comes to review the rest of the films of the quarter, the first thing that strikes one is that two revivals were made in London. *Scarface* was shown again, and except for some of the lighting, bore no signs of dating. It is still a brilliant film thanks mainly to the acting of Paul Muni and Ben Hecht's script. The other revival was *The Count of Monte Cristo*. When films have to be revived like this, except of course in the repertory cinemas, one is given plenty of food for thought about the state of the film industry.

What else has there been? Memory stirs and back comes *Young and Innocent*. Hitchcock, whose pictures earn more prestige for British studios than all the epics and historical pageants, has pulled it off again. He has made a quiet, homely little murder mystery with his hero and heroine chasing the murderer and the police chasing them. It was not particularly distinguished, but it was efficient, full of clever touches (the way the hero escaped from the police court was beautifully done), humorous and plausible as only Hitchcock can be. He is one of the few British directors who have grasped the fact that Hollywood realised long ago that a film cannot live by stars alone. Every character, if he only has one line or even none at all, is expertly cast, acted and directed.

Three more British films push themselves forward for mention. *South Riding*, adapted from Winifred Holtby's novel, had distinction and good acting. It also told a good story well and put over the Yorkshire atmosphere and countryside convincingly. If some of the smaller parts had been better cast, *Owd Bob* would have been on the same level as *South Riding*. It had a refreshingly different story, some good local colour and a clever performance by Will Fyfe. Both these pictures were reminders that we can make efficient and interesting films about our own country in this day and age when our producers' attention is distracted for a moment from the swords and cloaks of history and fiction. Nor need we be ashamed of films like *I See Ice*. This was another vehicle for George Formby, full of knockabout fun and entirely without subtlety. And so it should be, for there are thousands of filmgoers in this country to whom Mr. Formby means a rattling good evening's entertainment and Robert Taylor a pain in the neck.

AND SOME LAUGHTER

And now we are on the subject of laughter, four comedies come to mind. *Nothing Sacred* started off with the novelty of colour and an audaciously cynical script by

Ben Hecht. In cold print the idea that any table could be set on a roar by the spectacle of a dying girl being used as a publicity stunt for a newspaper seems neither likely nor desirable. But such was the case. True we are allowed to know at the outset that the girl is not dying. The film gets away with the idea by its biting satire. And that is no mere phrase, for in one scene the hero is actually bitten in the leg by a child in an extraordinary New England village. There was also a memorable scene in which Carole Lombard was socked full on the chin by Fredric March. My sympathies were with Mr. March.

Then there was *The Awful Truth*, an unassuming comedy enlivened by some original situations, some clever dialogue and a really witty and intelligent performance by Irene Dunne. All the glamorous ladies of the screen who are now larking about in slapstick could profit by a little quiet ponder over this performance. *Bringing Up Baby* was another crazy comedy—so crazy as to be almost pathological. Katharine Hepburn threw her Shakespeare to the winds and led the riot in this; Baby was a leopard—not Hepburn. The Hepburn's own personal ideas about how to play a heroine who never stops pouring out inanities and chases a scientist to the altar via another chase after leopards through wood and jail, may not appeal to everyone, but some of them are good ideas and she obviously thinks things out for herself.

The fourth comedy was a much more quiet and well-behaved affair. *Tovarich* had the delectable Claudette Colbert and the not unattractive Charles Boyer to grace its little fable about exiled Russian nobility forced to reign over a Parisian kitchen and be civil to a wicked Commissar. The stage division of acts one, two and three were faithfully followed, and the cast did the play proud, particularly Melville Cooper.

And so now lastly we move on to three epics. Cecil De Mille gave us *The Buccaneer*, a roisterous hundred and twenty-six minutes with Jean Lafitte, the pirate hero of New Orleans in the Anglo-American war. It was spectacular in the De Mille tradition, crowded and colourful. But the pirate craft grounded badly on the love interest. Next, *The Hurricane*. Après San Francisco earthquake, le deluge. In this film we had a highly-coloured version of the white versus Polynesian problem in the South Sea Isles; the solution coming in the form of a great storm which obliterated a complete island, all the extras and none of the principals, save poor old Aubrey Smith who perished bravely to the accompaniment of his chapel harmonium. The film was made for the storm and for twenty minutes or so it roared and raged, sometimes actual, sometimes faked and always impressive. The film also introduces a new torso, owned by Jon Hall.

Fire brings up the rear. *In Old Chicago* was made so that the great fire which destroyed the city in 1871 could be burned all over again for cinemagoers' amusement. It was so well done and so well photographed that the scenes might have come out of a contemporary newsreel. It was interesting and impersonal and strangely unmoving, for one had the same reaction to it as when one watches a newsreel of some great disaster. Three quarters of the film is over before the fire is reached. Take away the fire and you are left with a not very distinguished story of racketeering in a Victorian America that had not the good manners and heavy respectability to cloak up its misdemeanours that Victorian England had. And except for Alice Brady it needed a stronger and tougher cast.



La Mort du Cygne

DEATH OF SEVERAL HEROES

Many people die in the Continental Films reviewed below by ARTHUR VESSELO, but there are whimsical exceptions. . . .

THE FLOW OF French films into the specialist cinemas has now become a flood. Some have deduced immediately from this an overwhelming improvement in French production; but *in abstracto* the cause might just as well be a degeneration in other Continental fields. Nor is quantity as such a necessary proof of quality, since rapidity of succession is quite likely to be due to lack of staying-power. That mere audience-statistics, on the other hand, mean nothing by themselves is adequately shown by the record of the Czechoslovakian *Extase*, which, on the basis of a purely sensational appeal, is said to have brought more money to the box-office than any Continental film previously shown in Great Britain. It would be intriguing to know what audiences have thought after sitting through it, for—whatever the film may have seemed like in 1933—its chief effect now is to induce profound, if not untroubled, sleep.

Hazy inferences aside, however, the least one must allow about the French films which have recently been seen is that they maintain a marked consistency of level, rarely sinking below technical competence and now and then even touching the heights. In view of their numbers, this is notably a tribute. Three good samples arrived in a body just too late for the last quarter: seen on three days, one after another, they revealed a common finish of technique and characterisation which goes far to explain the modern European predominance of the school they represent.

The first of them—*La Belle Equipe*, with Jean Gabin in the lead—is a Duvivier, dating back to the summer of 1936.

Thematically it is of the familiar “copains”—“all-pals together” genus, tracing the progress of five unemployed workmen who set out to build a restaurant with lottery winnings. Trouble depletes their numbers, and a scheming woman threatens final disaster, fulfilled in the original 1936 version, but since modified to be staved off (traditionally) by the unbroken ranks of masculine friendship. A French readiness to depict truthfully the circumstances of the less fortunate classes, assisted by observation of detail, humour, and vitality of performance, redeem the film from the commonplace.

THE MADNESS OF NATIONS

The same intimacy of observation, emphasised by a repeated use of long panning shots in close-up, informs Jean Renoir's *La Grande Illusion*, which concerns itself with conditions in German prison-camps during the War, dwelling on the efforts of French prisoners to escape, and on their everyday relations with their captors. The ubiquitous Jean Gabin is here again; and here, too, is the excellent Erich von Stroheim as a courteous German officer, speaking three languages with a cosmopolitan American accent. Renoir hints at the part played by the War in the superannuation of the old aristocracies; his main point, however, is the futility of impersonal, large-scale warfare in which the combatants are inspired by no individual animus. A praiseworthy aim—and one appreciates the picture of enemy soldiers as ordinary men, not fiends. Yet it is perhaps unlikely that opponents in arms are so uniformly mild, resigned, and generous; for war is the madness of nations,

and madness has little contact with rational behaviour. Particularly improbable is the friendliness to escaping prisoners of a German peasant woman whose men-folk have all been killed. The episode where the fugitives themselves, half-starved, quarrel momentarily on the road, is more convincing than the general attempt, loyally carried out, to exalt human nature by forgetting its human weaknesses.

Marc Allegret's *Gribouille*, the last of the trio, is a whimsical comedy about a middle-aged provincial shopkeeper whose tenderness of heart leads him to employ as assistant a young girl acquitted in a murder trial—with awkward results, since his neighbours are not so pure and altruistic as he, or for that matter as the girl. Is it ungallant to suggest that a young woman with this young woman's amorous background might have been a little less wide-eyed and upright? But any such graceless doubtings are stifled in the face of Raimu's comic expressiveness—Raimu in the jurybox, falteringly addressing the judge; Raimu holding forth emotionally in the jury-room to his tearful fellows; Raimu in his little sports-shop (reconstructed with the most laudable accuracy of atmosphere), pumping up tyres or retailing bicycles and chest-developers to the French populace. Raimu, one feels, would steal the thunder from a thunderbolt; and *Gribouille*, if largely through his influence, is a film to remember.

"Tommy, Tommy, where's your grammar?" "Gone to the pictures wi' gran'per": so runs the antique jest; a play on words surely not much less hoary in French than it is in English. Yet Sacha (one-man-band) Guitry does not scruple to employ it, with his "grammaire" and "grand'mère", in *Le Mot de Cambronne*; nor, in the same, does he scruple to outrage every canon of film-making by giving us a forty-minute photographed stage-play, on a single interior set, with all its virtue in the dialogue. Only the sheer accident of the play's registration on celluloid compels its mention; but one may add that the shocking *mot* was introduced by Vigo into *Zéro de Conduite* with less pother.

Few films are as unamenable to sub-titling as would be *Le Mot de Cambronne*. Nevertheless, the manifold weaknesses of the superimposed title have led to the

formation of a company for "dubbing" Continental films and distributing them to a larger public. The first to be done is Duvivier's *The Golem*, but the result, one fears, is still something of a makeshift. Apart from the difficulties of satisfactorily matching words and lip-movements, the voices are flat and insufficiently varied, the accents are too genteel, and the tones recall the armchair-histrionics of a B.B.C. playlet, attaching themselves queerly to the Latin gestures of French men and women in actual movement. The characters—as Harry Baur says of the *Golem*—appear to be "half man, half spectre".

Based on a well-known German stage-piece, Ucicky's *Der Zerbrochene Krug* is to all intents and purposes another single-set film. Its consequent static restrictions are not so violent as in the Guitry affair, for the set is more spacious, and within its bounds, too, the camera retains a reasonable measure of freedom. But the production in any case hardly pretends to be more than a background for acting virtuosity—in particular for Emil Jannings as a lecherous scoundrel of a village judge in the eighteenth-century Netherlands. Bald, bibulous, crafty, leering, Jannings takes to his role with stout and unmistakable gusto. This is a part which he does well, and which his countrymen presumably greet with ringing cries of "da capo". Still, it is anything but a sympathetic part; and, though justice finally receives its due, the over-squeamish may even find the manifestation a trifle offensive.

Ramuntcho, a sentimental tale of young love in the Basque mountains, takes us out of doors again for a breath of air and sunshine. For this we must not be ungrateful: the natural surroundings are attractively presented, and the attendant village-interiors are also realistic. But the pattern of the film is too trite and conventional to create a persuasive whole. A little romancifying, peppered-up with tribulations, counter-sweetened with a happy ending, and served between neat slices of local colour—here we have our time-sanctified recipe. Oh for a new cookery-book! Pleased and titillated though we may be by the spectacle of wild ponies being driven across hillsides, of villagers playing at "pelote", of roisterers singing in taverns and their womenfolk chanting solemnly in church, yet such scraps and pieces are hardly enough.



La Grande Illusion

YOUNG LOVE IS OVERPOWERING

The theme of young love in a primitive environment recurs in *Janitzio*, described as "the first all-Mexican sound film". Here we have one of the stock variations, that of the noble savage menaced by civilized encroachments; and, in accordance with the mood of the variation, the climax is tragic. As one expects, local fisher-customs and elaborate photography have it all their own way; so much so that the ultimate effect is of overpowering slowness and heaviness. Indeed, the only true emotional relief is afforded by the interspersed moments of positive violence: a sudden cutting, as it were, of the Gordian knot of elementary action and lyrical pictures.

In *La Mort du Cygne*, by Jean Benoit-Lévy and Marie Epstein, young love gives place to the sufferings and passionate urges of childhood. These also have their prescribed pattern. The child is a little girl being trained as a ballet-dancer at the Paris Opera House, and an occasion is thereby provided for the insertion of much ballet-dancing, in rehearsal and in performance. The standard of production is high, but the ballet-exhibitions and the plot which they fill out are not completely welded into unity. As for the rather superficial delvings into childhood-psychology, only first-class characterisation could have given them validity, and it is not forthcoming: the child herself evidently bears a good deal more on her shoulders than she can carry. Incidentally it is odd that the one really outstanding dancer should have had to break her leg half-way through—devoting herself subsequently to acting alone, at which she is markedly less proficient.

With equal unwisdom, the makers of *Double Crime Sur La Ligne Maginot* commit the dramatic *faux pas* of working up interest and sympathy in a particular character and then—apropos of nothing—killing him off. If a crime was necessary, some other human sacrifice should have been found. If we were intended to be moved by the rigmarole of spying and Franco-German misalliances, our attention should not have been first diverted to a personality of more solid conception than those chiefly implicated. For the rest, the film grants us some discreet inward glimpses of the famous Maginot Line fortifications along the German frontier; and, while frankly affixing German nationality to its spy-assassin, makes a point—for what it may be worth in the context—of treating him as a gallant officer—who-only-did-his-duty.

Since the French importations are so many, it becomes almost worth while to differentiate some of them into a sub-category, consisting of those which draw their material from outside French territory. Thus *Troika* has its scene laid among the winter snows of modern Poland. In other respects, this film runs true to a familiar melodramatic type, including in its paraphernalia espionage, vaguely unhappy wives and headlong chases. The excuse for the main action is an unspecified Chinese civil war, now considerably out-of-date; and we encounter international conspirators who conveniently discuss their most secret villainies, in semi-public places, at the tops of their voices.

Nina Petrovna is doubly outlandish, for it opens in St. Petersburg at the turn of the century and proceeds thence to Vienna—that Vienna, fabulously "gay", which now sleeps in the tomb. Re-made, with alterations and with massive additions of dialogue, from the old German silent film, it bears also the closest affinity to the series of adaptations which lately culminated in *Camille*; indeed, Isa Miran-

da, the courtesan in the case, is distinctly more reminiscent of Greta Garbo than of Brigitte Helm. The formula has been refurbished and staged with some care, and there is a well-manœuvred setting-off of tragic love against light background-relief; but the atmosphere of loose ladies and dissipated officers and gentlemen is so emphatically pre-War that it is difficult at this time of day to stir up vast enthusiasm for it.

With *Drôle de Drame*—made by Marcel Carné and Charles David as director and producer, and brought here by the London Film Institute Society—we journey westwards again to our own shores. Here is London; but it is a strange London, observed through an amiably unkind French quizzing-glass and enveloped in a mixed aura of edged satire and wild burlesque. Obvious economy of setting is counterbalanced by a farcical prodigality of incident and the presence of platoons of characters. A murder which is no murder, with the supposed culprit himself conducting a bogus investigation into the "crime"; a libellous caricature of Scotland Yard officialdom; a sanctimonious bishop, depicted with almost blasphemous freedom: these are isolated elements in a plot whose involutions only a rash man would try to disentangle. Unrestrained by insular inhibitions, the makers have, it is true, occasionally been overwhelmed by their own extravagance, but they have succeeded, nevertheless, in turning out a refreshingly witty and amusing piece. The quality of the acting is especially noteworthy. Michel Simon and Françoise Rosay have parts which fit them like skins; and Louis Jouvet as the bishop has not given so satisfying a performance since his masterly display as the monk in *La Kermesse Heroïque*.

GROTESQUE AND SORDID

Jean Louis Barrault, who contributes his quota of insanities to *Drôle de Drame*, appears as a more serious madman in the title-role of Jeff Musso's *Le Puritain*—a fanatical Irishman, white-hot with religious hatred and repressed sexual frenzies. Liam O'Flaherty supplies both story and continuity: hence the locale. Barrault's portrait of a man who murders and lies in the name of religion, and who then suffers mental torment until he confesses, is a vivid and compelling one. He has the gauntness, the intensity, the blazing maniacal eye, of the true self-righteous neurotic. Pierre Fresnay adds a cool-headed policeman, neatly drawn, whose conflict with the criminal has echoes of *Crime and Punishment*; and Viviane Romance emphasises admirably the essentially simple outlook of the street harlot. Despite these, despite adroit camera-work and an elaborately-guided procession of events, the film remains incomplete. The atmosphere, attempting a brutal sordidness, is instead at times inexplicably grotesque; and the motivation, while fairly plain on the surface, misses underlying fullness. The roots of such a character are, before all, in his environment and upbringing; but here these things are of necessity matters of mere implication. The whole, therefore, hovers somewhat at random in the air, and the film's peculiar French-Irish acting-idiom brings it no nearer *terra firma*. A most interesting and unusual effort—but not in all ways successful.

As a tail-piece to this catalogue of French productions, there should be noted the arrival in the West End of *La Tendre Ennemie*, already appraised in these columns. It follows *Un Carnet de Bal* at Studio One, and may do so on the whole without fear.

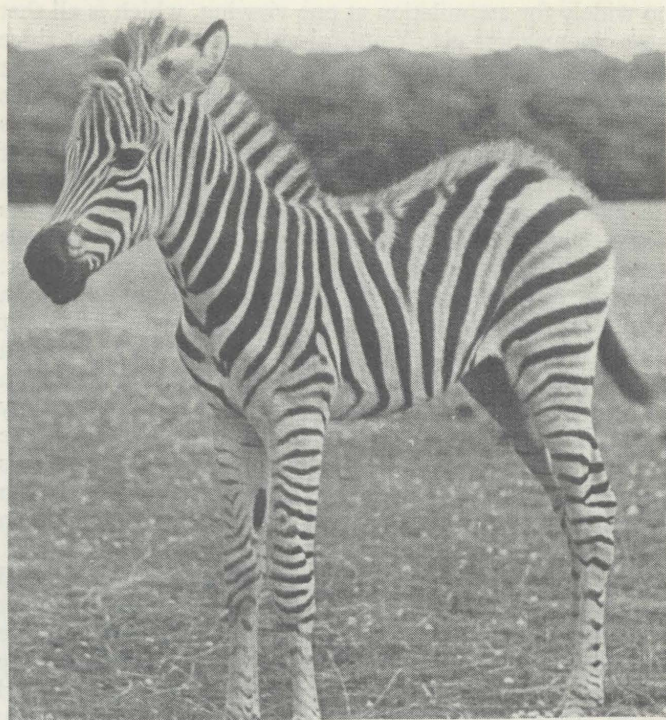
ZOO AND YOU

WILLIAM FARR *reviews two fine series
of animal films*

The Animal Kingdom

THE "ANIMAL KINGDOM" series of two-reel films now being issued by Strand Zoological Productions is one of the most important and is likely to prove one of the most popular, series of documentary films produced to date. Stuart Legg, the producer of the series, and all those working on the films have had the full collaboration, in facilities and advice, of Dr. Julian Huxley and the staff of the Zoo. Three of the six films here reviewed and most of the forthcoming six are designed as popular essays in evolutionary biology. They have as their theme the development, as seen in animals at the Zoo, of size, complexity, feeling, intelligence and independence of environment in the animal kingdom, from single-celled creatures to man. In treatment and presentation the producers have attempted—and I think succeeded—to strike a balance between scientific discourse and the popular interest in animals, to dramatise academic knowledge and correct popular misconceptions.

Most successful in achieving these objects is *Man into Monkey*, directed by Stanley Hawes, who had the additional assistance of Dr. Zuckerman, one of the leading authorities on the primates. The film traces the development of intelligence and social habits from the Capuchins, which live all the time in the trees and use their forelimbs as hands, to the gorilla, the largest and most manlike of the apes—"In the far past some such animal as this developed speech and became man". The three main sequences of the film deal with baboons, gibbons and chimpanzees, all of them familiar to visitors to the Zoo. It is with the baboons that the family unit is found—"the highest achievement so far in the history of human life". They live in colonies consisting of a number of families for protection; each family consists of one or more females and one male who jealously guards them from other males. The females, in turn, carry their young about with them and protect them while they learn from their parents and from other young baboons how to use their limbs and live in the colony. The beautiful and exciting gibbon sequence which follows is an astonishing feat of camera-work for which George Noble was responsible; (he also shot the baboon sequence which is also marked by brilliant cutting in the chase at the end). With effortless and apparently untiring grace and agility the gibbons swing about the trees by their long arms and only occasionally come down to the ground. When they do, they walk, unlike the baboons, upright on two legs. And so to the chimpanzees, which live in families and colonies, walk upright, can be taught to do work and in other respects to behave like human beings (more or less), seem to be able



Zoo Babies

to work out problems and not merely to behave by instinct, and have a wide range of vocal expression. Much of this sequence—including the chimps tea party which is now seen in its proper significance—will be familiar to Zoo visitors. But the primitive dance, illustrative of the chimpanzee's feeling for rhythm (a human characteristic often as primitively expressed by humans as by the chimpanzees) comes as a surprise and a shock. The music for this sequence and for all the films was written by William Alwyn, who has succeeded in contributing effectively to the total impression without distorting the facts.

Ranging from fish to man, *Zoo Babies*, directed by Evelyn Spice and photographed by Paul Burnford, traces out by similar treatment the progressive stages in the methods of reproduction and upbringing by which the continuity of the species is maintained. The smaller the size of the "family" the more "parent-like" are the parents, the more helpless are the young, the greater are the attention and care given by the parents and the longer is the period during which the young are dependent on them. In illustration the film shows fish laying millions of eggs which are left floating in the water, reptiles which bury their eggs while they hatch, birds which brood their eggs (sometimes the male shares or assumes this task), mammals like the wallaby which lay eggs and when the young are hatched suckle them in a pouch, and then a number of mammals—lions, tigers, wild horses and the monkeys and apes. The film contains an immense amount of information simply and effectively arranged, and is admirably commented, free from sentimentality. The quality of the photography and the high proportion of significant and carefully chosen shots, where it would have been easy to get away with anything, deserves special notice.

Mites and Monsters, directed by Donald Alexander and photographed by Paul Burnford and Jo Jago, ranges even wider than *Zoo Babies*, both in material and in ideas, perhaps

too widely for assimilation at one viewing, which is all that most cinemagoers get. Youthful visits to the Zoo not since repeated, legends secular and pious, and thrillers in print and on celluloid are responsible for many misconceptions about animals. With wit rather than feeling the film disposes of these as it proceeds to indicate, often by effective use of everyday analogies, what are the factors which condition the maximum possible size of living creatures, from the single-celled creatures upwards, and how various animals stand in relation to each other in respect of size and weight. Thus the film explains why insects cannot weigh more than about 5 oz. (this disposes of 30 ft. spiders), why birds must remain relatively small (and angels could not fly), why land animals, which must walk, are the size they are while, on the other hand, fish, generally speaking, are limited only by the amount of food they can obtain. And so it is that the whale is the largest creature that has ever existed, sometimes thirty times the size of a large bull-elephant, larger even than the dinosaur which gave way (before, incidentally, man appeared) to smaller and more intelligent animals.

The three remaining films are lighter in character and treatment. Paul Burnford's *Free to Roam* was made at Whipsnade where, over the 800 acres of land owned by the Zoo, animals from all parts of the world can live more freely and more naturally than is possible in the best town zoo and where, as a result, animals can be more scientifically observed. Here bison roam the prairie, elephants earn their keep hauling trees, and beavers dam streams at night while the wolves howl among English pines.

Behind the Scenes, directed by Evelyn Spice and photographed by Paul Burnford is a survey of the routine work at Regent's Park. A staff of 360, curators, scientists and keepers, is employed to ensure that the animals are properly fed, housed, and cared for in the interests of the animals themselves, the scientist and research worker, and the general public. The film presents the Zoo, not as a collection of cages with animals in them, but as a people's university and a scientist's laboratory where the animal kingdom—there are now 6,500 animals in the collection—can be observed and studied under constantly improved conditions.

The Zoo and You, directed by Ruby Grierson and photographed by Harry Rignold and S. E. Onions, also takes you behind the scenes, but this time to see the show as the animals see it. In terms of broad comedy the film presents animals and human beings side by side, fragments of a lecture on the hippopotamus find cruelly apt illustration in members of the audience. In the comparison man comes off badly. Hardly a scientific, but decidedly an educational film—if you can take it.

Secrets of Life

FOR FIFTEEN years now Bruce Woolfe and Mary Field, and their cameramen—Percy Smith, Oliver Pike, Charles Head (who died recently) and Frank Goodliffe—have been letting the cinema public into the secrets of nature. They must have produced almost 200 such films by now. Percy Smith himself started photographing plant growth as early as 1909 and ever since has been devising new and better ways of achieving the seemingly impossible. To the latest *Secrets of Life* series of one-reel films now being issued by G. B. Instructional he contributes, in *The Catch of the Season*, some remarkable and beautiful

photography of the development of the trout from the spawn upwards, and of a full grown trout approaching and rejecting a poorly-cast fly and taking (but thanks to the editor's kind heart escaping from) a perfect cast. These underwater sequences show that Percy Smith's camera has lost none of its cunning. Nor has Oliver Pike yet exhausted his patience and endurance as a bird photographer. For *Home Life in the Marshes* he has caught the principle stages in mating, nesting, brooding and hatching of six birds in their native Norfolk waters—swans, coots, wild duck, grebes, bittern, and snipe; and in *Perky Cockneys* he reveals the same stages in the life history of the London sparrow, that proletarian among birds one might call him, if he were not here revealed as depending almost entirely, for himself and his family, on the crumbs that fall or that he can take from every man's table. *Kings in Exile*, a similar study of the king penguin, was shot at the Edinburgh Zoo and to this extent called for less ingenuity but hardly, one imagines, less patience from the cameramen, George Pocknall and G. W. MacPherson. The contrast between the penguin's ungainliness on land and its grace and control in the water is emphasised by some effective under-water and slow-motion photography, which reveals also the way in which tail and flippers are used. See *How They Run*, a comparative study of animals' methods of walking and running, was also shot at the Edinburgh Zoo. The animals shown include lions, tigers, gibbons, kangaroos, and again the king penguin; some of the movements are explained by means of slow-motion photography. The last film of the present series, *Far and Wide*, is another comparative study, this time of four methods of plant seed dispersal—wind dispersal, animal dispersal, exploding fruits, and seed burial. All the films were directed and edited by Mary Field, who has effectively varied her approach to and treatment of the different subjects.

The commentary in these versions (which are intended only for public cinemas) is by E. V. H. Emmett of Gaumont-British News fame. His method, as will be known by those who remember the 1937 *Secrets of Life* series in which he was first introduced, combines lightly-phrased scientific comment with personal comments, sometimes witty, sometimes facetious, occasionally illuminating. In the 1937 series the method seemed to me largely successful; the information was there and the humour seemed the natural and spontaneous reaction of someone with a keen eye for human analogies to animal behaviour. Even if one would have preferred a straight commentary one could admire and enjoy the way in which the producers had tackled the demand for "more box-office appeal". But in this series the delicate balance necessary to this method is not fully maintained; the humour is often obvious and forced, and time which might, and could well, have been occupied with useful information is filled up with gagging. As a result, as it seems to me, the commentary hardly enhances the popular appeal of the films while it may seriously impair the scientific authority of the excellent photographic material. Even when the commentary in itself is successful (as in, for example, *Kings in Exile*) I wonder whether the method is sound if the object of the films is to inform the public. I, for one, would like to see not so much a return to the pre-Emmett days (for even then the tendency to invest animals and plants with human qualities and emotions was apparent), but some experiments aimed at achieving popular appeal by new and more profoundly scientific methods of approach and treatment.

HOLLYWOOD IN CAP AND GOWN

In the United States, according to this article by EZRA GOODMAN, the universities are at last taking the film seriously. "It is doubtful", he adds, "whether any other art in the first decades of its existence ever produced as many worth-while products as the screen has done . . ."

IF ANY additional proof to-day is necessary that the cinema has come of age, it may be found in the institutions of higher learning throughout the United States. According to a recent report in *Variety*, 80 out of some 800 colleges—notably conservative in adding new studies to their curricula—are now offering nearly 200 different courses in various phases of motion-picture study. The list of colleges includes such diverse institutions as Columbia University, Texas University, Northwestern and the University of Southern California, the last-named offering five different film courses.

Classes range from outlining visual aid in education to a study of the social, historical, technical and æsthetic aspects of the cinema. In New York City alone, Columbia is offering at least three different courses on the motion picture, two in conjunction with the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, while New York University and the College of the City of New York are also represented. "Numerous normal and teachers' colleges," according to *Variety*, "make it prerequisite that future teachers pass a course of study in visual education." Under this heading would come teachers' colleges in New York, Massachusetts, Missouri, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota—to name but a few—and fourteen state teachers' colleges in Pennsylvania.

STILL LARGELY HAPHAZARD

This wholesale recognition of the cinema by the universities is merely part of a more generally widespread and serious approach to the motion-pictures as a whole. It is manifested in an improved standard of journalistic film criticism, the recent publication in the United States of such scholarly works as *Film and Theatre* by Professor Allardyce Nicoll, of Yale, and *Art and Prudence* by Professor Mortimer Adler of the University of Chicago, and the establishment in 1935 of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library for the purpose of collecting, preserving and studying outstanding films.

This study of the cinema is as yet largely haphazard and only an indication of the work that remains to be done in that direction. Nevertheless, this somewhat grudging academic surrender during the last few years serves as a reminder of the long way the cinema has come in its forty years of existence. In its kinetoscope and nickelodeon days, before and after the turn of the century, the cinema was the stepchild of the arts, booted about or entirely ostracised by the reputedly intellectual *élite*. It remained for a stage actress, the renowned Sarah Bernhardt, to remove some of this prejudice against the cinema by consenting to appear on the screen in *Queen Elizabeth* in 1911. A few years

later, the success of *Quo Vadis*, a full-length Italian spectacle, provided a precedent for D. W. Griffith in producing *The Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance*. The motion-picture could no longer be brusquely dismissed as an inconsequential plaything.

"ONLY A HANDFUL OF CREATORS"

Nevertheless, this deprecatory attitude towards the cinema has not disappeared yet, even to-day. It is evident in the violently unreasoning tirades of such a pundit as George Jean Nathan, the more facile barbed epithets of a George S. Kaufman and in the apologetic attitude of the actors, directors, writers and even producers, who sally forth periodically from Hollywood with press statements ranging all the way from polite innuendoes to gruesome tales of the screen's sacrifices to the great god Box-Office. It is evident in the public utterances of such pontificos as Terry Ramsaye, who opines that the cinema's function is merely to entertain, thereby very neatly doing away with all the potentialities of the film medium and all its attendant problems. And all this is not to be wondered at, when we remember that it was not so very long ago that erudite and esoteric tomes were being written to prove that the motion-picture is not an art at all. To advance such learned, æsthetic arguments to-day would be equivalent to firing bullets into a straw man.

Had some of these great minds, intent upon disowning or apologising for the cinema, devoted the equivalent energy to analysing its nature and its problems, the film's history might, perhaps, have been a different one. But this was not so. Only a handful of creators within the cinema and a few perceptive critics approached the matter soberly. Such directors as Griffith and Chaplin in America, Murnau and Pabst in Germany, Clair in France, and Eisenstein and Pudovkin in Russia were among the few who stopped to examine the nature of the film in its technical, æsthetic and social aspects. And a few critics, such as Vachel Lindsay and Gilbert Seldes in America, approached the problem with an open mind.

THE FILM AS AN ART

As far as one can deduce from the many incoherent broadsides directed against the cinema, the film's two great sins—for which it has accordingly done penance—are its great popular appeal and the fact that it has produced a great many "bad" works of art. Being primarily a pictorial medium, and therefore understandable to even the most uneducated spectators, the cinema was enthusiastically taken up by the people in a way that no art had ever been. As a result, it was wholeheartedly damned by the intelli-

gentsia who were unable to discover any virtue in something that had been accepted by the butcher, the baker and the candlestick-maker. And it was blackmarked by the professional bluenoses who carried over their censorial meddlings from the stage to this new and more popular art with its greater social implications.

I will be the first to admit that much of the cinema's product has been and still is "bad", in the sense that it lacks a realisation and mastery of the technical potentialities of the film medium, and that it rarely remains true to its subject-matter. But to deprecate the film *medium*, the film as an *art* is illogical. An art is judged by its best and not its inferior productions, just as the drama is judged not by its *Abie's Irish Roses* but by its *Hamlets*. And there is no statistical evidence to lead us to believe that there have been more bad films in proportion to the cinema's total output than there have been bad novels or plays. In fact, it is doubtful whether any other art in the first few decades of its existence ever produced as many worthwhile products as the screen has. And when we take into account that there is a purposeful attempt to play down to the largest possible audience in order to recoup the large financial investments on most films, the results are all the more to be marvelled at. It simply goes to prove that good works of art must not necessarily be unpopular. Some of the greatest productions in the history of the cinema

are to be found among the Russian films which are made to appeal to the most ignorant peasants, and yet at the same time manage to fulfil the most subtle demands of the highly-trained spectator. The great work of art can be appreciated in more than one way.

In spite of all this neglect and handicap, the cinema has managed to develop steadily. Neither the aesthetes nor bluenoses have been able to stem its popular advance. It has forged ahead with very little intelligent criticism either from within or without. Potentially, in its fusion of pictorial, literary and musical elements, the cinema is a powerful artistic medium, although it is little more than an empty plaything to-day. Its technical resources have been amazingly developed, but their proper application has not yet been determined; its social potency has made it bear the brunt of a near-sighted censorship. In all these aspects serious study of the film, such as the American universities are able to furnish, has much to accomplish. There will have to be trained craftsmen to create in the cinema, not outsiders borrowed from the other arts. There remains the technical nature of the film to be determined, an authoritatively critical tradition to be erected, the social implication to be pondered. In these phases, a sober and sympathetic study of the cinema may be of inestimable value in helping the cinema realise its own potentialities as the greatest social art of our generation.

SPANISH A.B.C.

In a country torn by civil war THOROLD DICKINSON, during the past few months, has been quietly filming—schools! The conditions he and his companions found in making the picture he describes in this interview with

SIGHT AND SOUND

A FILM dealing with the state of education in a country at war seemed a curious subject to be faced with—and perhaps a trifle dull. Little did we know!

We got out to Barcelona on January 14th this year, and from 11 a.m. on the 15th until nearly noon on the 16th we had no less than six air raids. We were in a hotel in the new part of the town and not all of the raids came right over us, but it was a warming experience after London all the same. At 11.30 at night they dropped twenty bombs down by the port. Watching from our bedroom window it was a fascinating sight, but daylight revealed scenes of devastation which increased with appalling frequency during our ten weeks in the country.

We filmed under difficulties, visiting children's colonies, schools, factories and mines in and around Madrid, Valencia, Barcelona and some front-line trenches. We could not make a scenario but worked from statistics and local information arranged as best we could. You see, we only had a couple of hours in any given spot—just time to look around, concoct a plan of action in a couple of minutes and then shoot. It seemed strange to be making a film on education under fire—the sounds were very distracting! A film on the war itself would have been much easier; we sometimes found it hard to concentrate on so detached a subject.

Many of the facts we discovered are amazing. For

example, during 1937 they opened no less than 10,000 new schools in Republican Spain. The keenness of the people to learn is astonishing. At the front, 300 yards from the insurgent lines, we entered a little shell-pocked cottage and found twenty to thirty soldiers learning trigonometry. An hour before and an hour later they were firing rifles. . . .

And again, at a munitions factory we found the whole staff attending a physics class. The idea behind it all is the conviction that a man or a woman is no good as a citizen or fighter unless he has some grasp of the wider issues involved in the life around them, an opportunity denied to a vast proportion of the Spanish nation in former times.

In Madrid, when we arrived, shells were dropping. Passers-by appeared to show very little concern: they just moved over *en masse* to the side of the street nearest the shelling as one moves to the lee of a wall to get shelter from slanting rain. There was a shell-hole in our bedroom corridor, but nobody seemed to mind.

My most vivid memories? A beaming little Professor in Barcelona surveying the shattered University and saying: "The drugs in my laboratory are all right, so I can carry on"; the floodlights at night in Barcelona after air raids and the gangs of men working feverishly in the glare extracting bodies from the wreckage. . . .

SILENT SHADOWS

The close of the age of silent pictures is remembered by MISS MARIE SETON in the fifth of her articles on the British Cinema

ON JANUARY 6TH, 1921, the *Bioscope* wrote that "it is impossible to ignore the fact that 1920 has proved, on the whole, a year of disappointment to the British film business. . . . The wonderful prospects with which the year opened have not been fully realised, and, although nothing has happened to shake for a moment one's firm confidence in the future of the moving picture, there is no doubt that progress has been far less rapid than it promised to be. . . . The film industry could scarcely have hoped to escape altogether this international wave of commercial disorganisation and depression." Except in America, the victory of the Allies had not in any way helped the production of films. It is an interesting fact that the European picture made in 1919 which is still to-day considered a masterpiece is *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, produced in Germany in the midst of devastation.

The revival of British films during 1919 petered out. The activity of the re-opened London Films and of Gaumont, Hepworth, B and C, Ideal, Broadwest, Welsh-Pearson and other companies dwindled, and their productions were only spasmodic. The only production company which was continually at work during the first few years after the war was Stoll, who regularly employed as directors Maurice Elvey, who was already well known, Rene Plais-satty, Harold Shaw, F. Martin Thornton, Guy Newall, the actor-director of George Clark Productions starring Ivy Duke, and Sinclair Hill. Later the Stoll company sponsored Herbert Brennon, who directed a film for them with Norma Talmadge, then at the height of stardom; and the Vitagraph Company pioneer, Stuart Blackton, when he returned from America to make three spectacular pictures, the first being *The Glorious Adventure* with Lady Diana Cooper.

ENTER RONALD COLMAN

New companies were formed, among them the Alliance Film Corporation of which Harley Knowles was production manager as well as director. This company aimed at making super films, and they are said to have had a capital of £1,000,000: the stars were Matheson Lang and Hilda Bayley. In 1920 Leslie Howard founded Minerva Films with the idea of producing feature films in miniature. Associated with him were C. Aubrey Smith and the late Sir Nigel Playfair: the stories were written by A. A. Milne and directed by Adrian Brunel. One of the chief shareholders in the concern was H. G. Wells, whose story, *Kipps*, was produced as a film by Stoll in 1921; George K. Arthur played in it and as a result was given a contract in Hollywood.

The lure of Hollywood led to the migration of many actors. It may be coincidence but none of those who achieved outstanding success had been stars of the legitimate theatre, the source from which the majority of British stars have been drawn. One of the first to go, in 1916, was an ex-beauty queen, Ivy Close, who had become popular under the direction of Hepworth. Among the post-war emigrants was a young man who had been a seaside pierrot in 1914, and later played in Hepworth's pictures—his name was Ronald Colman. Leslie Howard

and Clive Brook were already known when they went to America, also Victor McLaglen. After a varied career as an athlete, boxer and soldier, McLaglen was "discovered" in 1920 for *The Call of the Road*, a film with a genuine feeling for the countryside which was distributed by Granger's Exclusives.

The policy of the Granger company is interesting because they realised the international character of the cinema, and attempted to put into practice the idea that films are usually more convincing if they are made in the districts where the stories are laid rather than reconstructing in the studio, or inserting a few actual backgrounds. With this idea in mind, they allied themselves with the Dutch company, Hollandia, who had formed an international unit in Holland including Elsie Cohen of the Academy Cinema. Hollandia made a picture for Granger of Dumas's novel, *The Black Tulip*, using the actual Dutch settings of the story. Miss Cohen was then put in charge of a production of Galsworthy's play, *The Skin Game*, then running at the St. Martin's Theatre. The stage company were engaged and for certain scenes they were taken to the Potteries. The third venture of the Anglo-Hollandia company was even more ambitious—an American star, Caryle Blackwell, was engaged by Miss Cohen at a large salary to play in the first *Bulldog Drummond* picture, which cost—including the £4,000 paid for the rights—£14,000.

Other American stars soon came to England—Evelyn Brent to play *The Experiment*, the exotic Betty Blythe appeared in Herbert Wilcox's *Chu Chin Chow*, Dorothy Gish starred in *Nell Gwynn* and Betty Compson in *Woman to Woman* made by Graham Cutts; while Mae Marsh, co-star with Ivor Novello in his only American picture directed by D. W. Griffith, came to play with him in *The Rat*, made by Gainsborough Pictures in 1925: two years later Herbert Wilcox brought another famous star to England to appear in *Mumsie*—Pauline Frederick.

A WALKING SKELETON

Such an array of expensive Hollywood stars may give the illusion that the British film industry had recovered from the slump of 1920 and was flourishing. That was by no means the case. It continued to be a skeleton carrying its head about. Nobody wanted British films—they were the skeleton at any cinema feast. According to Adrian Brunel, after three years of ups and downs British productions dwindled in 1924 to a total of thirty-four, nor was this the lowest ebb, for the following year only twenty-three films were produced; while in January, 1926, the only films being made were Brunel's own one-reel burlesques, *Pathetic Gazette*, *Typical Budget*, *The Blunderland of Big Game*, *The Great Segrada*, and *Cut It Out*—a satire on censorship. This stagnation was even more depressing if seen in relation to the growth of film production in other European countries which had been far more deeply and terribly devastated by the war. In France there was a group of young artists, including Jean Renoir, Rene Clair, Alberto Cavalcanti, Jean Epstein and Jean Benoit-Levy, already

creating a new type of film and financing them on a co-operative basis. Germany had produced a series of astonishing films, which though they were shadowed by the horror of defeat and spiritual and economic chaos, showed that the cinema could break through commercial conventions and express something more than fashions in triviality. In Russia Eisenstein had completed *Potemkin* and Pudovkin had made *Mother*.

These attempts to mould the film into an art started a movement all over Europe; only in England was there no response for a long time. The producers and distributors shunned "artistic" films like the plague, fearing that the audience would vanish from the ever larger picture palaces if they found "art" instead, or as well as, entertainment there. The American origin of Griffith's films made them exempt from the stigma of being called "art."

AND A CHURCH MOUSE

The instructive film, though it did not have to bear the stigma of being "art", was the church mouse of the industry. In 1922 Lord Montagu of Beaulieu was of the opinion that "kinema pictures, properly organised and selected, are of the greatest value to education, and yet are so far hardly used at all." After the war the companies of Charles Urban steadily declined. Meanwhile, in 1919, British Instructional Films was founded by Bruce Woolfe, and in the following year the perennial *Secrets of Nature* first appeared directed by Charles Head and Oliver Pike. Percy Smith, released by the winding up of Charles Urban's company, joined them in 1926, and also Mary Field, who began developing non-theatrical distribution of educational films by a series of lectures for schools. Another and for the time being more important part of Bruce Woolfe's work was the production of a series of reconstructed films of the war. The first was *The Battle of Jutland*, made in 1920, which incorporated much original material in the possession of the War Office. During the next six years Bruce Woolfe sponsored successively *Armageddon* and *Zeebrugge*, and *Ypres, Mons and Nelson*, which were directed by Walter Summers. British Instructional also sponsored a scenario, *Shooting Stars*, written by Anthony Asquith, who, when he came to direct his own pictures, brought an indefinable sensitiveness to them which, possibly on account of commercial hegemony, has not been able to develop. Asquith's first film, *A Cottage on Dartmoor*, suggested that this director might have the elements of genius.

The vogue for war films took the greatest hold in America, but was presented there in the form of story-films, a style which was almost immediately adopted by directors here. With the exception of Alfred Hitchcock—whose early films, *The Lodger* and *Downhill*, stamped him not only as England's most remarkable director with an innate feeling for real national characteristics, but also as a director of international importance—most of the established directors made in turn pictures with the background of the war. 1927 saw the high spot of the over production of war films. Maurice Elvey made two of the best, *Mademoiselle from Armentières* and *Roses of Picardy*, based on R. H. Mottram's *The Spanish Farm*, Herbert Wilcox directed *Mumsie*, Adrian Brunel *Blighty* and Sinclair Hill *Guns of Loos*, the film for which he "discovered" Madeleine Carroll, B.A.

Producing British films was the most disheartening business, directing them a feat in optimism, and acting in them

SOME FILMS—1920-1927

1920

- ALF'S BUTTON, one of Cecil Hepworth's greatest successes.
- THE CALL OF THE ROAD, the film which "discovered" Victor McLaglen.
- THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND, the first of British Instructional's reconstructed War films.
- AT THE VILLA ROSE, A. W. Mason's story directed by Maurice Elvey, and since re-made.

1921

- SQUIBS, Betty Balfour, directed by George Pearson.
- THE BOHEMIAN GIRL, the only film in which the great Ellen Terry appeared, directed by Harley Knowles.

1922

- THE WONDERFUL STORY, the first production of Graham Cutts.
- DICK TURPIN'S RIDE TO YORK, a very successful film directed by Maurice Elvey.
- CHU CHIN CHOW, Herbert Wilcox's first solo essay at showmanship, featuring the late Betty Blythe.
- THE SKIN GAME, directed by B. Doxatt-Pratt for Anglo-Hollandia. It was re-made as a talkie nine years later.

1923

- WOMAN TO WOMAN, Clive Brook played opposite Betty Compson in this film directed by Graham Cutts.
- THE MAN WITHOUT DESIRE, the first big acting success of Ivor Novello directed by Adrian Brunel. It was the first British film to be featured at the Tivoli.
- THE WANDERING JEW, Matheson Lang repeated his stage success in a picture directed by Maurice Elvey and costing between £8,000 and £12,000. It is supposed to have grossed £100,000.

1924

- REVEILLE, another Betty Balfour film directed by George Pearson, described as "A drama of the War and its after-effects."
- COMIN' THRO' THE RYE, twice made by Cecil Hepworth.
- BONZO, NEWS-BURLESQUE, cartoons drawn by Studdy with scenarios written by Adrian Brunel.

1925

- THE PLEASURE GARDEN, the first picture directed by Alfred Hitchcock.
- THE RAT, Ivor Novello's play directed by Graham Cutts. It has recently been re-made with Anton Walbrook.

1926

- THE LODGER, Alfred Hitchcock's "thriller" was the most interesting film of the year. Gainsborough spent £11,500 on it.
- MADMOISELLE FROM ARMENTIERES, Maurice Elvey's film which made a star of Estelle Brody.
- THE FLAG LIEUTENANT, directed by Elvey and featuring Henry Edwards, was given a Command Performance on 3rd May 1927, at the Marble Arch Pavilion.

1927

- THE VORTEX, Coward's play directed by Adrian Brunel.
- GUNS OF LOOS, Sinclair Hill "discovered" Madeleine Carroll.
- DOWNHILL, Hitchcock follows up his success.
- EASY VIRTUE, another Hitchcock based on Coward's play.
- THE RING, a third Hitchcock.
- DAWN, Dame Sybil Thorndike as Nurse Cavell in a picture directed by Herbert Wilcox.
- MADAME POMPADOUR, Herbert Wilcox brings Dorothy Gish from America.
- THE ARCADIAN, first film directed by Victor Saville, who had been production manager for Gaumont.
- DRIFTERS, John Grierson's "documentary" which started the movement towards a new kind of British film.

more often than not a dead end. The great obstacle in the way of British film production after the war was the fact that exhibitors did not want to show them, for the public had grown excessively dubious of paying to see them. (After the war 95 per cent of the pictures shown here were of foreign manufacture.) The public thought British films too slow—a justifiable criticism; and they found the stars lacked glamour—a quality which is not inherent in the Anglo-Saxon. What nobody fully realised was that if properly encouraged the public might learn to enjoy the quieter tempo of their own lives if portrayed on the screen with sincerity and technical excellence. The public might—and sometimes they even did—appreciate a lack of effervescent glamour signified by the success of George Pearson's "discovery", Betty Balfour, and Estelle Brody.

The failure of British films to compete successfully with American films was already apparent in 1921. In order to encourage the flagging industry, the British National Film League was formed. Its aims were to shorten the period between the trade-show of films and their release, and to see "that no film should be booked by exhibitors *before* the film had been trade-shown. The object of this latter reform was to break down the custom of distributors booking blocks of films—sometimes the whole output for a year, before the productions had even been made". The first practical step taken by the League, and one that reflects the abject condition of the industry, was to organise a British Film Week, the idea of which was to persuade patriotic exhibitors to show British films for *one week* each year. The encouragement and publicity accruing from the League did eventually improve the technique and reception of home-made pictures, a few of which even achieved distribution in America.

In 1927 the Cinematograph Films Act was passed and came into operation the following year. The Act, known as the Film Quota, mainly provided for:

- (a) That "blind booking" and "block booking" of films should be illegal, *i.e.*, that distributors should not book films to exhibitors before the films had been trade-shown.
- (b) The period between the trade-show and the release-date of a film should be defined and gradually limited, *i.e.*, for the first year of the Act's operation the period was limited to twelve months, the next two years it was limited to nine months, and after October, 1930, it was limited to six months.
- (c) Distributors were to offer for rental, and exhibitors were to show, a percentage of British films in the following proportion—

Year ending	Distributors' Quota per cent	Exhibitors' Quota per cent
1929	7½	5
1930-31	10	7½
1932	12½	10
1933	15	12½
1934-35	17½	15
1936-38	20	20

- (d) British films should be those productions which have been made by British producers or companies and in British or British Empire studios, and wherein 75 per cent of the costs of the production (labour and services) have been paid to British subjects. The percentage of costs is exclusive of payments in respect of copyright and payments to one foreign actor or actress or director, but inclusive of payments made to the author of the scenario.

And the curse of this blessing became the ignoble "Quota Quickie".

N.B.—I am very much indebted to Mr. Adrian Brunel for lending me his unpublished MS. *A Brief Historical Survey of the British Film Industry*, from which I have taken some information.
—M. S.



Owd Bob (1925)

By the courtesy of Henry Edwards

ARE YOU A FILM-WRIGHT?

Books of the quarter reviewed by ERNEST BETTS, WILLIAM FARR *and others*

MR. L'ESTRANGE FAWCETT, himself a former scenario editor and film critic, has produced an excellent little book in "Writing for the Films" (Pitman, 3s. 6d.), and is well qualified to distribute a few home truths on this exasperating theme. That he has a rather cynical view of the whole business and takes the inevitable slam at the producer—"How many creative producers are there?" he asks, but does not stay for an answer—makes a book of instruction such as this more readable and entertaining, and does not lessen its value to the intrepid souls who still think there is money to be made in film stories.

Mr. Fawcett has invented a new word "film-wright" (and a pretty ghastly word it is) to describe the writer of screen stories. But we can forgive him the word for the sake of the ideal behind it, which is simply that a race of writers for the screen and for nothing else but the screen should be encouraged to grow up, and that adaptations, mangled resurrections of famous plays, and all the hackwork of uninspired scenario staffs, should be swept clean out of existence and a new class of "film-wrights" be put to the task of re-creating pictures from the foundations upwards.

He castigates the "treatment" method and wants to abolish what he recklessly calls the "treatmenteer". (Mr. Fawcett ought to write for "Variety": he will certainly never get a good notice from St. John Ervine.) "I want to see the best authors writing freely and directly for the screen," says he, "thereby making the treatment process unnecessary. I want to see the author writing for the screen in treatment form—if you like—with enough knowledge of technique to make his story perfect in screen continuity without sacrificing any of his original inspiration."

That one who has suffered the pangs of scenario editor should be able to write in this strain proves that there are still heroes in literature unsuspected by Wardour Street and that Mr. Fawcett is of the mettle of Errol Flynn and Gary Cooper and is doubtless due for early stardom. He writes as a revolutionary, and of course that is the best way to write, but he is not too impassioned to be constructive. He has some good things to say about the form and rhythm of a film, the need for artists and poets in the cinema; and practically everything he says will produce a melodramatic leer from those engaged in writing for British films at the present moment (if any such there are). Yet he gives credit to *Top Hat*, *Roberta* and other radio revels and realises that Hollywood has uncanny intuitions in such matters. The trouble with books on the cinema is that they are never quite up-to-date, and in addition to this, much of Mr. Fawcett's material goes over old ground, especially what he says about the mass-murder of screen stories. However, his practical outlook and first-hand knowledge are of value, and, if you have ambitions to be a "film-wright," this book at any rate tells you what *not* to do, and even attempts the Parnassus-heights of what *should* be done. As a manual, it is humorous and helpful.

ERNEST BETTS

HOW TO WRITE AND SELL FILM STORIES (with a complete shooting script for *Marco Polo* by R. E. Sherwood). Frances Marion. *John Miles*. 12s. 6d.

Miss Frances Marion is reported to be the most highly-paid scenario writer in the world. In this book she gives the reader the fruits of her twenty years' experience of writing and selling stories. From the very first page the reason for her own success is evident. Her inventiveness as a story-writer apart, she has thoroughly analysed her market, and the minds and hearts of producers, audience and stars are to her as an open book. She knows what they want and that is the alpha and omega of this story-writing business. "You must write", she tells the learner, "what the studios want, and not what you think they want".

When, then, she deals with characterisation, plot, motivation, theme, dialogue, dramaturgy, emotion, common errors, the censor, plagiarism, adaptation and continuity, she writes not as a theorising student of aesthetics, but as a saleswoman, shrewd and knowledgeable. True, the book is full of quotations on the finer points of authorship from writers, some well, and others less, known, but this merely shows that Miss Marion is not completely immersed in the practical issues to the exclusion of all literary and dramatic values. However, since, as she says, "at present the film story comes nearer to being written to formula than does any other kind of writing", it behoves the aspirant to learn the ingredients of that formula, remembering always that the public "looks to the photoplay to provide it with a substitute for actual life experience".

In dispensing this substitute according to prescription, most care must be taken of characterisation, for a deficiency of which no amount of action can make up. Plot she has reduced, like many students of the drama, to that recognised number beyond which human ingenuity has failed to progress. Those dealing with the morbid, the abnormal and the highbrow are to be avoided, while "plots with pretty girls, handsome men, witty, homely or picturesque characters of either sex, fashionable clothes, nice homes, 'places you would go to if you were rich', fights and chases" are highly recommended. It is also to be borne in mind that "it may be good art, but it is not good business to send an audience home depressed and blue".

She stresses the importance of motivation and sends the student to his dictionaries for the words "relating to the gradation of emotion and feeling that produce human action". The theme of a story, she astutely points out, is as often as not derived from some wise saying such as "A woman's place is in the home".

Sponsored by a quotation from Cicero, the essence of the chapter on dialogue is to be found in the words of August Thomas, "A line must advance the story, develop character, or get a laugh. If it does any of these things it is a good line; if it does two of these things it is a fine line; if it does all three it is a great line". On dramaturgy Miss Marion finds herself in agreement with Aristotle, whose criterion

was the credibility of the audience, while, on emotion, she warns the beginner against the bizarre. Equally valuable are the chapters on selling, the Censor, plagiarism and continuity.

Since she is a successful writer, Miss Marion's style must be a matter of interest, and while here and there are pungent phrases, on the whole her English tends towards the "turgid lapidary style", studded with ugly words like "depiction".

However, here are all the tricks of the trade fully and admirably explained by an expert, and, in addition, for analysis by the student, the script of *Marco Polo* written by another expert, Robert Sherwood.

Was it modesty that prevented Miss Marion from giving us a sample of her own work?
HUGH GRAY

THE FILM GAME. Low Warren. *Werner Laurie*. 10s. 6d.

Mr. Low Warren writes from personal experience of film production and film journalism dating back some thirty years. Because the early days of the British film trade are so barely documented—except in the contemporary trade papers—any book of personal reminiscence is of value but we could wish that we could accept all of Mr. Warren's statements with confidence and that he could have given more details (including more dates) about the events in which he was a direct participant or of which he was a close observer. Checked from other sources, the book provides useful information for the serious historian and pleasant reading for anyone interested in the early days. You will find Shaw's opinions in 1915 of the cinema; an interesting correspondence in 1917 between Hall Caine and Lloyd George on the production of a film "to touch the heart and inspire the soul of the nation in this great hour of its hope and need" which was finished (probably) but never seen by anyone; and an account of a film of the life of Nelson produced in 1918, with the co-operation of the Admiralty, by Maurice Elvey with Donald Calthrop in the lead, which was sold for £15,000, a record price for the times.
W. F.

CINEMANIA. A. G. Bennett. *Jarrold*. 18s.

"The mass affliction of Cinemania becomes both human and understandable", says Mr. Bennett, "when people like Frances Day . . . pose for our delight as alluringly as in the 'still' on the opposite page"; (the "still" was, I think, a publicity "still" and not included in the film). The relation between this cinemania and "filmic creation", as Mr. Bennett sub-titles his book, is not obvious, and in his 400 pages the author throws little light on it in spite of his avowed intention to deal with this "greatest art force the world has ever known", "critically, on lines parallel with every other form of criticism—literary, musical, artistic or what you will". Mr. Bennett is driven to undertake this laudable and ambitious task because of the general lack of knowledge of the principles, and methods and possibilities of the cinema and because "of books of serious story-film criticism there are none in this country". Mr. Bennett has seen a great many films and gives us his views and feelings about them with considerable enthusiasm and personal flamboyance. While he is rarely illuminating he is often provocative; we had not, until now, thought of De Mille with reverence as "the one man living who was able to translate the Christian Ethic into the universal

language of the Cinema." The "stills" chosen to "portray film people rather than film things", including several of the author directing, or acting in, amateur films, are of interest. They include a scene of Shangri-La from *Lost Horizon* captioned "Pale hands I loved beside the Shalimar", and one of Anna Neagle's, "Britain's most versatile screen actress", which might have been taken from one of the spectacles that Mr. Bennett describes elsewhere as doing "little more than exploit the wonders of the female form in every conceivable variety of dress and undress for some reason that would only be comprehensible to a lunatic or an opium addict". Now that we have been able to read what Mr. Bennett has to tell us about how films might be made we shall look forward to the day when he achieves his long ambition to show us how.
W. F.

MOTION PICTURES IN EDUCATION. A Summary of the Literature. Dale, Dunn, Hoban and Schneider. *The H. W. Wilson Co.* \$2.50.

This new publication of the American Council on Education was designed to meet the need of an organised, selected bibliography to help research workers, teachers and administrators to evaluate what has been done, and what ought to be done, with the film as an educational aid.

With this excellent ideal, the book unfortunately becomes an unwieldy thing of 450 pages crammed full of facts and statistics which teachers, in this country at least, will find difficult to enjoy. That this is unfortunate will be evident to anyone who reads Part V, prepared by Charles F. Hoban, Jr., which deals with past researches into the use of the film in education.

The writer here has realised the full value of a summary of this nature, and has concerned himself not so much with giving significant extracts from all the researches into the subject which have hitherto been published as with evaluating their results as a whole and presenting them as the most informed and comprehensive enquiry into the value of the film in the class-room which has yet been seen. It is to be hoped that everyone will put up with the somewhat tedious repetition of the first three hundred pages of the book and will not put it aside until they have read this part, which I commend especially to every education authority in the country.

Part VI, compiled by Fannie W. Dunn and Etta Schneider, and dealing with the training of teachers in the class-room use of visual aids, is also valuable although it, too, suffers a little from the fault which mars the book as a whole.

As a survey of educational cinema in the United States, the book will be of great interest to those teachers in this country who have had any experience with instructional films.
G. B. S.

CAREERS IN THE FILMS. Robert Humfrey. *Pitman*. 3s. 6d.

Only one-third of this small book is directly relevant to its title. In these thirty-odd pages the author deals with the work of the sound engineer, the sound-effects supervisor, newsreel cameramen, film processing ("as a starting point for a young entrant into the industry I would recommend every time a job in the developing labs.") and auditions for girls. On page 35 the author lists some thirty kinds of jobs which go to the production of a film.
W. F.

BEHIND THE SCREEN. Edited by Stephen Watts. *Barker*. 8s. 6d.

For a straightforward, simple (albeit simplified) and readable account of the more important activities which go to the production of a feature film and of the co-ordinated relationship of these activities, this book could hardly be bettered. The fact that most of the expert contributors lined up by Stephen Watts (who himself contributes a preface and useful notes) are drawn from M.G.M. is both an advantage and a limitation. The general uniformity of outlook achieved makes for clear exposition of a complicated business; but efficient as the M.G.M. "star"-laden organisation may be, it is not the only and necessary way, nor indeed is it an inevitable way, to successful film production. Leslie Howard and Lee Garmes here appear as deviationists; their contributions on acting and photography bear the mark of individuality (and are, incidentally, the most readable chapters). There is room behind the screen for the imaginative artist as well as for the efficient executive and the skilled craftsman; for the poet as well as for the financier.

W. F.

MODERN OPTICAL PROJECTORS. E. T. Westbury. *Marshall*. 3s. 6d.

This book will be useful to those who require a simple introduction to the principles involved in magic lantern projection, episcopes and various specialised forms of projection which are employed in workshop practice. It also contains practical instructions for the home (or school workshop) construction of a magic lantern and an episcopes. Moreover, particulars are given regarding a number of epidiscopes and simple episcopes at present on the market which would come in useful to anyone selecting an instrument of this type. Unfortunately, there are omissions which the word "modern" in the title renders rather surprising. For example, no mention is made of substandard slide projection, film-strip projection (except for the highly-specialised Sayce-Watson apparatus) or of filament projection lamps with a higher wattage than 500. Moreover, a more authoritative tone could have been given to the book by avoiding such phrases as "The writer has not seen them for some years now" regarding types of lamp (30 volt, 30 amp.) which a reference to current catalogues could have confirmed as still being manufactured and stocked.

VICTORIA THE GREAT

An argument between a reader and Professor F. J. C. Hearnshaw over the latter's review of Victoria the Great in the last issue of SIGHT AND SOUND

To the Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,

I am amazed as a teacher of history that Professor Hearnshaw should condone any historical inaccuracies which he does with regard to the film *Victoria the Great*.

I should like to put the following points to Professor Hearnshaw:

1. Does he realise how difficult it is to inculcate an appreciation of accuracy in children? As a teacher one insists upon accuracy in history answers, and yet here is a professor of history stating that the historical inaccuracies in the film "can be defended on the ground of histrionic desirability" and "that most of these deviations from historic fact are trivial". How can any inaccuracy be trivial? Is not the present chaotic state of the world due to *inaccurate* thinking. If deliberate or inadvertent inaccuracies are to be allowed in films depicting historical events, then one might as well "throw up the sponge" and permit pupils to run riot with historical facts.

2. Perhaps Professor Hearnshaw does not realise how difficult it is for children to develop a chronological sense? For any film or book to deliberately upset the chronology of events should not be tolerated.

3. Inaccuracies are not allowed in science or mathematics, and no scientist to my knowledge would tolerate or condone any inaccuracies in the presentation of a scientific subject for any reason whatsoever. Why then should inaccuracies be tolerated in the presentation of an historical subject?—History deals with facts.

4. Historians raised loud protests against some of the inaccuracies in G. B. Shaw's *Joan of Arc*, yet a play does not leave the same lasting impression as a film, nor do children go to plays as they go to the "pictures".

5. Some people get any knowledge they have of history from the films; why then should they be allowed to take away a wrong conception of Palmerston? I hold no brief for him, but it is definitely immoral to permit an injustice to a person or a country. Is not the world suffering, and always has suffered, not only from inaccurate thinking, but also from unjust thinking?

Certainly let there be historical films; they can and could be a great aid to history-teaching, but first and foremost they must be *accurate*.

P. D. MCCLOSKEY, M.A.

SIR,

It is perhaps a sufficient reply to Miss McCloskey to say that her canons of criticism would rule out not only all historical films, but also all historical plays (including those of Shakespeare) and all historical novels (including those of Scott).

This, however, may be said in addition. It is a grave dereliction of duty on the part of teachers if they allow their pupils to remain under the delusion that they can learn accurate history from either films, or plays, or novels. The pupils ought to be told that dramatic and literary necessities make certain departures from fact inevitable. What these necessities are I tried to point out in an article which I contributed to the *Fortnightly Review* in June, 1936. All that can be asked from the producers of films, plays, and novels is that they shall avoid flagrant perversions of important truth.

It is an excellent exercise for both clever pupils and sensible teachers to criticise films, plays, and novels and detect their errors.

F. J. C. HEARNshaw

A CHALLENGE

IF ONE takes the trouble to study the history of the film in education, a very surprising fact becomes evident which may almost, at first sight, be considered a "relapse". That this apparent turning-back should come so early in the life of the instructional film is a little disconcerting to those about to introduce films into their teaching and, moreover, to those who have spent so much time and money in the development of the medium. So that it will, perhaps, serve a useful purpose to press here for an examination of the several points involved.

Few years had elapsed since the discovery of a successful means of projecting motion pictures when films were first used in education and, long before the war, the film was being used extensively and successfully in the training of medical students and, indeed, in a few primary schools. It made slow progress, however, in spite of the large number of authoritative and conclusive experiments made to prove its effectiveness.

Indeed, it was not until the advent of the sub-standard sound film, only a few years ago, that the educational film in this country began to be widely adopted. Tremendous strides have been made since then, until to-day this country leads the world in the production of instructional films, whilst their use in our schools increases rapidly.

Recently, however, a large group of teachers and educational authorities have made a definite move in a direction favouring the use only of silent films with "daylight projection". The primary function of the film, they contend, is to animate the picture in the text-book and the drawing on the board, and there have been produced many excellent films, often in the form of loops, to serve these purposes. An increasing number of schools are adopting the method and the movement is rapidly gaining in popularity.

It is a curious fact, however, that no one has yet conducted experiments comparing the relative effectiveness of sound and silent films, or of "darkened room" and "daylight" projection. Few will dispute the place of the silent film in the classroom, and yet, when some teachers are clamouring for more films on music, literature, foreign languages, and physical training, all of which require sound, there are those who postulate "silent films only". Whilst some teachers, with sound projectors installed in rooms equipped with blinds, a screen, and adequate ventilation, can and do use all types of films, others are confining their attentions to a "mechanical blackboard".

The relationship between the cinema and the child demands the serious and immediate consideration of the educationist. Are not those teachers who hold up before their pupils an animated but silent picture, complete with frame, neglecting entirely this very important problem?

On the other hand, there may be advantages in "daylight projection" which warrant its wider adoption. There may, even, be adequate reasons for denying the place of the sound film in the classroom. If so, would someone come forward and explain them? The present situation is too bewildering to be allowed to continue.

F. BUCKLAND SMITH

NEW HOSPITAL FILM

THE FILM has long been used in the services of medicine. The Institute's Catalogue of British Medical Films lists over 350 titles. The great majority of these, however, outside the

health propaganda films, are highly specialised films of interest only to medical men themselves. By the production (in collaboration with Gaumont British Screen Services) of a new film, *The War Without End*, King Edward's Hospital Fund for London have performed a valuable service in presenting medical work in hospitals in a form which will be interesting to the general public. The subject, in the words of the commentary, is "a war that never ceases, waged by an army that never sleeps, the war against disease." Opening with a brief introduction on the work of medical pioneers, of Leeuwenhoek, James Young Simpson, Louis Pasteur, Joseph Lister, Ronald Ross, Jesse Lazear, and Ernest Harnack, the film proceeds to show the work of a modern hospital in a series of well-defined sections.

The first shows the elaborate preparations made for an operation, particularly in the sterilisation of instruments and the scrupulous regard for cleanliness; the preliminary injection of evipan and the administering of the general anaesthetic ensure the greatest possible freedom from pain; the patient is even spared consciousness of the journey from the ward. The second deals with X-ray treatment, and shows, in addition to an X-ray of a broken ankle, a cine-radiograph of a beating heart taken by the London doctor who has perfected this most recent achievement.

A section on fractures shows the newest advances made in their cure, especially in the plaster-of-Paris treatment of a fractured spine which enables the patient to walk within a week or even sooner. There follows sections on dentistry and ophthalmics: the first dealing with the cleaning of the teeth, conservation, the bacteriology of decaying teeth, and the improvement of malformations; the second with the ophthalmoscope, the ophthalmic radiation lamp, contact glasses, and the use of the electromagnet for removing metal foreign bodies. Perhaps no part of the film is so well calculated to touch one with admiration as that on the treatment of diabetes which shows children happily self-injecting their daily dose of insulin, and enjoying their specially-devised meal (which they have themselves helped to prepare) especially when one is reminded that but for the discovery of this treatment by Frederick Banting and Charles Best in 1922, these children would be either dead or doomed without hope. The sections on blood-transfusion, various forms of light treatment and massage-treatment are as detailed and as fascinating in their subject matter. After a sequence on air ambulance work the film concludes with views of the Duke of Kent presiding at a meeting of the Management Committee of the Fund.

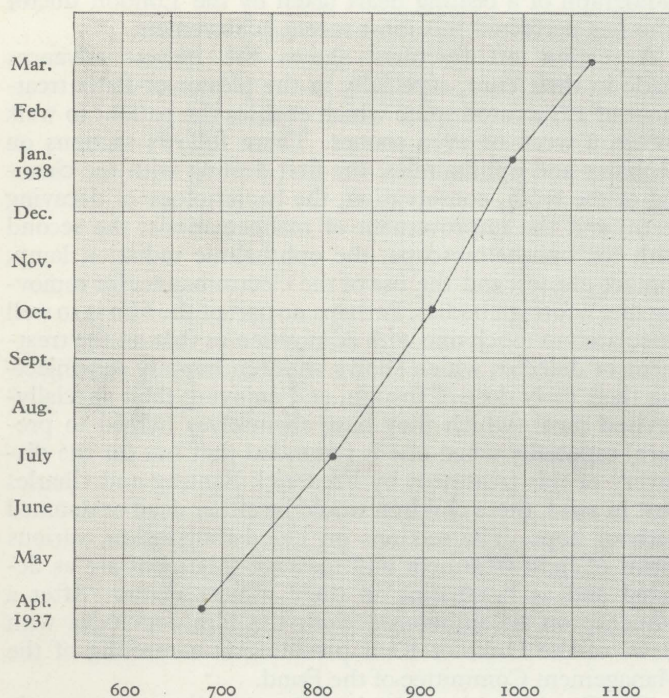
The Fund has been wise in eschewing direct propaganda for its work in this film, and in contenting itself with putting forward a clear and comprehensive picture of the work which goes on daily in our large hospitals. It is a tribute to the work of Francis Searle, the director, and William Charles Stone, who is responsible for the research, scenario and commentary, that they have succeeded so well in compressing into the brief space of thirty minutes a comprehensive picture of a field of such vast dimensions. It is necessary to add that nowhere in the film is there anything to injure the susceptibilities of the most imaginative.

Standard and 16mm. copies may be obtained for non-theatrical use from King Edward's Hospital Fund for London, 10 Old Jewry, E.C.2. For cinema release a shorter version, lasting about 16 minutes, has been prepared. The film may also be borrowed in the sub-standard version from the National Film Library, 4 Great Russell Street, W.C.1.

E. H. LINDGREN

PROGRESS!

Steadily and surely the use of the film in education is gaining ground. An increase of 160 projectors in use in the schools of England, Scotland and Wales has been recorded by the British Film Institute since the last analysis was published in SIGHT AND SOUND six months ago. The latest details are given in the table below, together with a graph showing the results obtained by the B.F.I. "Projector Census" during the past year



WHAT CAN BE DONE

By FREDERIC EVANS, *Chief Education Officer of Erith*

THERE IS NO DOUBT that the development of a technique in the use of educational films will come from the schools themselves rather than from superimposition by an education authority or a government department. At present the difficulties in the average school for using films regularly are so many that it is only the enthusiasts who can, as a rule, overcome them. This enthusiasm expresses itself best in a school film society and it may be of interest to readers of SIGHT AND SOUND to know something of the work of two such societies in non-selective central schools.

In school number one, the Picardy Central School, they possess a 16 mm. sound film projector which is quite effective for audiences up to about one hundred and twenty. They also have an old type 35 mm. silent projector. The former is convertible to show silent films as well. Both projectors were purchased by the Education Committee.

This society at first used very extensively the various films which could be obtained free from certain great industrial concerns, colonial offices and similar sources. Displays

	England and Wales							Scotland							Grand Totals
	9.5mm	16mm. silent	9.5 & 16mm.	16mm. sound	35mm. silent	35mm. sound	Totals	9.5mm	16mm. silent	9.5 & 16mm.	16mm. sound	35mm. silent	35mm. sound	Totals	
Preparatory, Primary, Senior Elementary and Central Schools	153	176	70	46	61	8	514	9	89	6	—	1	—	105	619
Secondary Schools	19	63	14	41	21	14	172	8	32	3	2	1	—	46	218
Technical Colleges, Universities, etc.	3	62	13	15	24	12	129	—	11	3	4	5	—	23	152
L.E.A.'s for general use	3	24	10	23	1	—	61	5	17	4	—	—	—	26	87
Totals	178	325	107	125	107	34	876	22	149	16	6	7	—	200	1076

to groups of not more than eighty are given in the school basement, which has been darkened and ventilated to suit this purpose. Only non-flam film is used.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE'S HELP

Now that the Education Committee has come to the rescue by paying for the hiring charges of films selected by the school film society from the lists in the Bulletins of the British Film Institute, these are in regular use as illustrative material for school subjects like Geography, Natural History, Citizenship, Science and History.

During the winter months the society gives regular displays on certain evenings in the school hall of educational and cultural films to which old pupils and parents are also invited. A small charge is made and the proceeds are used to supplement the funds available for the hire of films from the Education Committee.

It is now a regular thing to see at the school the arrival of the week's supply of films and the dispatch of the used ones. The work of this school with educational films has become so well known that local health departments, societies and organisations often borrow the projector and sometimes, also, the services of the teacher operator for displaying films at their health weeks, air raid precautions exhibitions and on similar occasions.

The next step will be a scheme for the darkening of the school hall, where already a baffled electric air extractor has been installed by the Education Committee in readiness for the fuller use by the school film society in the daytime of the hall. Already much is being learned of the possibilities of films in school as well as of their use in after school programmes to which others are invited. The keenness and energy of this society have encouraged the Education Committee to assist them with every means in their power.

SILENT FILMS

In school number two, the Northumberland Heath Central School, which is also a non-selective central school with a late type silent 35mm. projector, and for classroom work a small 16mm. silent hand-turned projector is also available. The school photographic society also possesses a 9.5mm. camera and projector combined, although this recent addition to their equipment has not yet been brought fully into use.

It will be realised that in this school full sized silent films are mainly used and the pictures are shown to one year group (*e.g.*, Form Ia, Ib, Ic, Id) together once a week. In this way films illustrative of the stage and range of subjects studied by a particular year group can be obtained and a correlation established between the school curriculum and the films which are used. Each programme is planned to last about three-quarters of an hour.

METHOD OF TEACHING

The films, as shown above, are selected to fit in with the work being done by the children. There is preparation beforehand by the teachers and simple tests and discussions afterwards. Breaks between each programme are allowed and the lights turned up so that the pupils can make notes and so that short discussions with the teachers as leaders can take place. Sometimes a film is rewound and run through a

second time where the discussion makes this necessary and when there is time.

This is done without a wait as the first film is being rewound whilst the second is showing. A projecting operator from a local cinema comes to work the apparatus and for this service the Education Committee pay him an appropriate honorarium. In this way expert projection is made possible and the apparatus can be maintained in first-rate condition. The projection house is equipped with the necessary anti-fire devices so that all types of films can be used.

Some experiments are being tried with the issue of questionnaires to each pupil before the film is shown, these being prepared by the teachers concerned and duplicated on the school duplicator. Obviously to do this the teachers have to view the films before they are shown to their classes.

BOOKING

The honorary secretary of the School Film Society circulates all the teachers on the staff with brief precis of the films he is able to obtain and the teachers indicate which of these films are likely to supply illustrations directly upon their syllabuses, which are of general educational interest and which are likely to prove unsuitable as far as they are concerned. These returns act as a guide to the honorary secretary when he requisitions his weekly quota of films.

The cost of the film hire is paid by the Education Committee who have provided a special sum for this purpose in their estimates. The requisitions for the films are sent to the Education Office from the school a few weeks in advance of the date when they will be required. Contract rates with the educational film distributors are arranged.

Reports from the school show that, in particular, film illustration of school lessons is particularly fruitful of results with the pupils of lowest intelligence. Bright pupils will learn rapidly with almost any kind of teaching, however meagre in illustration, but mere words to the duller sorts are meaningless except when they are wedded either to action or to concrete illustration. To them especially is the film an almost essential part of their education.

This School Film Society has also organised special displays for parents and others of some of the excellent sound films shown by the Western Electric Road Service, but the great aim of the society is the acquisition of a 16mm. sound projector for use in school and parents' programmes. This will be used to supplement, not to supersede, the large silent projector. Experiments are also afoot in the use of the microphone and loud speaker by the teacher when speaking a commentary prepared about the silent films. In this way a personal note is struck and the commentary can be framed to suit the interests of the actual children concerned. I am not sure if this is not the ideal method of using films in schools, for by it the teacher speaks his personal commentary and is in no way ousted by the film from his job as a teacher.

From the Education Office to both these School Film Societies, as they are published, are sent the Bulletins of the British Film Institute and other lists or particulars of educational films wherever they can be obtained. Copies of SIGHT AND SOUND are also supplied and everything possible done to encourage the initiative in this matter which has come spontaneously from the schools themselves.

AMATEUR FILM MAKING FOR SCHOOLS

One of the earliest of all experiments in Amateur Film Making for Schools was made by a school in Southport. Here J. W. KNOWLES, Secretary of Southport Education Committee, tells how the experiment began

ABOUT FOURTEEN years ago one of our Headmasters bought a second-hand 35mm. projector. It was hand-turned and had several parts missing. Some he was able to buy; others he fashioned himself. Thus started in Southport the film in the school, and as will later be shown, the making of films.

In those days there was not much choice of suitable films for schools. They were chiefly travel, nature study, industry and the like and were hired when they had served their purpose in the Cinemas. They were good enough in their way, but as will be appreciated they were not always suitable for children.

THE FIRST EXPERIMENT

It was perhaps this which influenced the making of our first school film, for this Headmaster, not getting exactly what he wanted, set out to make a film. Not for him a timid little experiment; he planned a film somewhat reminiscent of the tale of the Roman Centurion, in Kipling's "Puck of Pook's Hill", and he called it the "Dancing Gnome" or the "Story of the Boy who didn't like History".

It was a 35mm. film, the cast consisted of some 200 children and there were seven star parts. The total footage "shot" was 3,000 which he eventually cut to 1,200.

The film was developed, printed and finished at home employing crude apparatus, and a frequent placing of the bathroom "out of bounds" to the annoyance and inconvenience of his family. Costumes were school made, as well as the simple properties called for. Intricacies of lighting, interior sets and so on were obviated by shooting all the film outside on sunny days. The classroom scene, for example, was effected by removing desks, blackboard and children outside and under the classroom window; the battle scene between the Picts and Romans, involving most of the large cast, was staged in the sandhills near the school.

The film, once carefully planned and the scenario written, needed little producing, except that some restraint had to be exercised in the battle scene, which the cast took seriously, and steps had to be taken to see that the Picts were defeated and not the Romans. The production was a great success and on showing proved to be virile and natural, and the film though eleven years old, even now can be regarded as a very fine effort.

A PIONEER SCHOOL

This school is really our pioneer school in film projection and film making. It is now equipped with a 35mm. sound film apparatus, a school microphone equipment, and record

re-producing apparatus, all of which have been assembled by the Headmaster and housed in a special projection chamber which is a veritable marvel of ingenuity in the matter of sound and visual aids to education, but it is only fair to say that in this provision the school is quite exceptional.

The school since, has not made a long film. It has chiefly devoted its efforts to shorts dealing with school journeys, films with a definite school interest, and at the moment is making a short on the intricacies of the four heddle loom, weaving at this school being something of a speciality reaching a very high standard.

THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION FILMS

Shortly after the making of the long film above described, and about eleven years ago, the Education Committee acquired a 16mm. camera and a projector, and this principally was done to allow our Organiser of Physical Education to take films of his particular work. Starting in a modest way, so far back, he regularly has been making films even since. The object of these films is to support and illustrate lectures to teachers. They do not show the work of Physical Education under ideal conditions; they deliberately show faults as well as good points and in this they have a particular value. Normally they depict the work of scholars taken at their various schools, playing fields, or baths, and they show work at schools not possessing a gymnasium.

In all, eighteen of these films have been made up to date. Seven of these describe Physical Training lessons for Junior Boys and Girls and Senior Boys and Girls. The others are interesting in that they show special variants. One for example shows three grades of work in an Infants' School—in the area of a neighbouring Authority—which, lacking sufficient room in the playground, uses, under proper arrangements, an adjacent street. Another depicts the work of three Manchester Schools based on the Board's Gymnastic Reference Book for boys. The present Warden of the Carnegie Physical Training College at Leeds was then the Organiser of Physical Education for Manchester and assisted in the production. This film has been three times to the Carnegie Hall, where it is highly valued.

SLOW MOTION

One film is interesting in that it shows the sprint start and the relay take-over. If the camera does not lie, it might be said to settle the age long controversy about the stand up and the crouch start in the 100 yards race, for this part

is in slow motion. Everything has been kept in the film, false starts as well as proper starts.

Then there is a special film on swimming, showing different strokes with faults and good style. Part of this film was arranged by Mr. W. J. Howcroft, but the rest shows scholars and ex-scholars of Southport Schools. Another film on diving is mostly in slow motion produced to show good and bad diving and the special flat diving for racing.

Attracted by the value of Scottish Country Dancing a film of this has been made, the dances being done by a Junior Mixed School and a Senior Girls School. The film shows an analysis of the steps for teaching.

COLOUR

School athletics, miscellaneous jumps, putting the shot, throwing the discus, make up the remainder, not forgetting two special films depicting our massed demonstration of physical exercises and dancing done by the Elementary School children on the occasions of the Jubilee and Coronation. Half the total school population took part before an audience of 20,000 people. Incidentally the Coronation display film is partly in colour with sufficiently successful results to encourage us to do more.

All the films described are silent 16mm., 400 feet—except the Coronation film—and are projected at 16 frames per second. The Education Office possesses a small room which serves as projection room, and all cutting, editing, making of titles and descriptive lettering is done in this Department. This procedure has now acquired a polish and finish almost professional.

As will be gathered the majority of films made so far, and dating back some eleven years, are illustrative of Physical Education but it is pleasing to note that from this has developed an interest in the schools making their own films. It is considered that in and about a school there is a wealth of valuable material for school purposes and which particularly lends itself to the amateur film maker and does not present technical difficulties in the making.

GARDENS

For example two schools possessing gardens are making "shorts" this year on pruning of fruit trees, keeping of bees, disbudding of plants, seed germination and an extra in colour to show their garden when in bloom.

Mention has been made of the film on weaving, and in addition there is to be a film on the correct method of using tools in a Handicraft Room. This will probably lead to shorts on other processes. At one of the schools is a very fine Marionette Theatre and already part of the play "Hansel and Gretel" has been filmed. The complete film will show the mechanics of the little theatre, the manipulation of the puppets, the making of the puppets, stage furniture, scenery and so on.

FOOTBALL

An Infant School—quite sophisticated in its use of films—has in hand a film on Infant school activities and shows promise of a most interesting and valuable production. Another school—a Senior School—has broken new ground by having successfully completed a Football film. The school has a prize winning team and the film show the proper method of taking corner kicks and other salient features of the game, the artists being schoolboy performers of some local reputation. This film recently received a good

deal of publicity in a Manchester Evening Paper, and was held up as an example of how to teach and explain certain phases of the game.

SOUND ON DISC

All our films are silent but in this connection it might be appropriate to mention another phase of amateur film making and this is making sound discs which are played on a gramophone and used for "background" and even commentary—particularly the exact commentary needed. Synchronisation is obviously a simple matter since no movement or action in the film is reproduced in sound, but the arrangement is singularly effective when used with the film. The discs are cheap to make and within the compass of the ordinary senior school. These described are in fact being made in a Junior School and there is in course of production a series of English speaking records and commentaries for their films. Here for what it is worth is a cheap, effective means of introducing sound which, though admittedly not quite the same thing as the proper recording on the film, gives an added value to the silent projector.

It will probably be agreed that the making of films by schools is a progressive stage beyond the projection of films, and assumes some knowledge and experience of educational films, film technique as applied to schools, and as an aid to teaching. It is this experience which perhaps has given a stimulus to our efforts in film making, for 60 per cent of the schools of this Authority possess projectors and before the end of the present year this number will have increased.

LONDON FILM SCHOOL

The Fourth Film School for the study of all matters relating to the use of films in school will be held from July 25th to August 5th at the Regent Street Polytechnic, London, W.1. The School is organised by the British Film Institute in conjunction with the Educational Handwork Association. The fee for the course is £3. Copies of the syllabus and of the registration form may be obtained either from the British Film Institute or from Mr. J. W. S. Kay, 74 Limesdale Gardens, Edgware, Middlesex. See also advertisement on page ii.

The inaugural address will be given by Mr. John Grierson on Monday, July 25th; the chair at the opening ceremony will be taken by Mr. H. E. Dance.

The practical course of instruction in Film Making will be conducted this year by Stuart Legg (Supervisor of Productions, Strand Film Company); J. Holmes (Supervisor of Productions, G.P.O. Film Unit) and L. J. Hibbert, Head of the School of Photography, Regent Street Polytechnic.

The course in Technique and Manipulation of Projectors will be conducted by Mr. H. D. Waley, Technical Director of the British Film Institute, who will be assisted by representatives of firms lending projectors for demonstration at the School.

Visits to Film Studios will be arranged. It will be remembered that last year visits were paid to Denham, Pinewood, Shepherd's Bush, etc.

It should be noted that the evening classes this year have been discontinued and that the hours will be from 9.30 a.m. until 4.30 p.m.

THE GREEN PLOVER

A practical example of the way the film may be used for teaching, by WILLIAM KERR

THIS LESSON was taken with a class at an evening meeting of the Glasgow Branch of the Scottish Educational Film Association. It did not pretend to be a "model lesson", not even a typical film lesson. It was an attempt to lead a class to observe and discuss one particular film, and the suggestion has been put forward that, as such, it may have an interest for readers of SIGHT AND SOUND.

Various considerations prompted the choice of *The Green Plover*. I wished to work with a class quite new to film teaching, and quite new to myself. The film had, therefore, to be self-contained, to be free from technicalities, to be interesting. And, as the class was to be from the primary school, the "story" had to be fairly simple and direct. *The Green Plover* seemed to meet my demands. The photography was good. It made a quick appeal to ten-year-olds. There was a satisfactory amount of essential movement. There was much to observe and much to discuss, and the film supplied all the material for the class "answers".

Preparation consisted in viewing the film again and again, until I felt I knew it by heart. A film can no more be used without preliminary study than can a chapter of a text-book. Gradually I worked out a line of attack, and saw an ever-increasing amount of good teaching material in the picture. Soon I was faced with my chief problem—the difficulty of completing the lesson in the bare hour in which a class could reasonably be expected to remain interested. Careful selection had to be made, and rigid economy exercised in the use of what was chosen.

The class was a novice one, city-born and city-bred. To prepare it, accordingly, to use its eyes, it was led first of all into a short preliminary discussion. It was about to see a film of a bird's life. What would it expect to learn? Suggestions came freely, and from them were selected: "Home," "Food," "Appearance," "Nest," "Eggs," "Young" as possible subjects of study. They were set out across the top of a blackboard as headings of columns. The name of the bird was then given, and the class's ignorance of it ascertained. As a further inducement to watch and think, the pupils were told that this bird had been given an act of Parliament all to itself. Why? That was to be the final question.

The film used was a mute version of the original sound production. Commentary, therefore, seemed to be essential. The attempt was made to keep it short and direct. Nothing was given away, but attention was drawn to what seemed to be the important shots. The film was run through without stopping, and discussion began.

The ten-year-olds made a most gallant attack. The majority were so interested in what they had seen that they actually forgot there were rows of silent adults behind them, and spoke up freely and confidently. Gradually the columns on the blackboard filled. The "Homes" of the bird were noted—bare grass-land, shingle, plough, marsh—and with a little effort we arrived at the generalisation, "bare, open country". There are shots of the bird feeding, and class reasoning decided, from consideration of the season and the landscapes, that the food must be "worms and grubs". Here the only piece of "non-film" information was supplied

—that the plover consumes quantities of creatures hostile to the farmer's crops. The main facts of the bird's "appearance" were quickly noted—its colour, crest, long legs, long beak, keen eye, its unending watchfulness, its wary, zig-zag manner of approaching its nest. Inferences were drawn as we proceeded. The "value" of the long legs, long beak, watchful eye, etc., was soon established. "Home", "Food", "Appearance" were linked together, one might almost say, triumphantly. The class enjoyed the thinking it was asked to engage in. It knew the "clues" were all in the picture, and very little leading was required. Next it was settled that this haphazard hollow of a nest had a purpose behind it, that there were reasons for the colour and the shape of the eggs. The question of their size proved more difficult, and one or two courageous explanations almost provoked laughter, but a consideration of the young birds led to the solution.

There followed a short piece of revision. How did the plover contrive to protect itself and its young? Two methods were discussed—"our" bird's, and that of the carrion crow, which plays a short part as villain of the piece. The bully uses the bully's weapons. What are the plover's? It was a satisfactory moment when the answer came—"It uses its brain". Scientists might object, but Senior III, and its teacher for an hour, were content. A quick glance at the blackboard proved that the bird was well fitted to live its life—that its build and its habits combined to make existence possible.

Here, I think, the second run of the film should have been given, and the big question of the reason for the act of Parliament kept to the conclusion. To relieve the silent audience as quickly as possible from the boredom of my questioning voice, I tackled it first. Again the class rose to the occasion. After a few stumblings it saw that the act could not be aimed at crows, that the big eggs, so well designed to produce strong and self-reliant baby peewits, might prove an attraction to that unnatural enemy—man (and boy). Another glance at the blackboard showed us why the plover deserved well of humanity, and the problem was solved.

Before the second run, several members of the class were asked what they were especially keen to look for. There was a gratifying variety in the replies, and an encouraging proof that the points made had been appreciated. The second showing was given in silence. The operator stopped the film once or twice at shots of especial interest. Then the class gave a unanimous vote that the plover well deserved its act of Parliament, and that part of the evening's proceedings was over.

It was agreed that no amount of stuffed birds, still pictures, model nests, etc., could have given the class the opportunity for deduction that the film provided. They saw the bird "at home", and in action. They were asked to think about what they had seen, and their response seemed to prove that children like to think, when they have something that interests them to think about. It is in the provision of this interesting and "practical" material for thought that the school film finds its complete justification.

FOREGROUND AND BACKGROUND

The Essence of the Educational Film described by J. L. HARDIE, Deputy Education Officer of Edinburgh

THE QUALITIES to be looked for in any film will naturally depend upon its purpose. So often the film is blamed for not doing what it was never intended to do, and for not fulfilling an object for which it was never designed. The purpose is the supreme consideration, and according to their "intentions" films may be classified broadly into four main groups.

"FOREGROUND" FILMS

There is first the "lesson" film, the object of which is purely instructional. It is the nucleus of the teacher's presentation, and is itself a piece of exposition designed specifically to fit into the existing school curriculum with the minimum of adjustment. A second type is the "illustrative" film which, as the name implies, is intended to illustrate a particular point or points in a lesson. It has a definite and narrow aim, but, even so, it must attain it with an accuracy, a clarity, and a force that no other illustrative medium can surpass. An obvious example is the cyclic film used to illustrate, by animated diagram or otherwise, a process that repeats itself indefinitely and at regular intervals, *e.g.*, wave motion or the functioning of a steam-engine. Both of these may be described as "foreground" films. They aim at a certain scientific perfection that satisfies the intellect, and the measure of their excellence is their fidelity to the truth. They should therefore be clear, simple and logical, should permit of no confusion of thought, and should induce the pupil to make the correct, because the only, inferences from what he has seen. They should not take longer than ten minutes to show, and preferably far less time. The success of the Glasgow "shorts" of five minutes' duration suggests that for school purposes such "foreground" films might with advantage be reduced to three or four minutes.

"BACKGROUND" FILMS

To extend and enrich the pupil's knowledge of his environment, to cultivate and broaden his feelings and taste, and to give atmosphere and reality to that which he knows merely from books or from oral instruction, another type of film is required. It is the "background" film, which differs from the preceding types not merely in the wider scope of its intention, but in the quality of the work it seeks to accomplish. While the former are in the narrow sense "instructive", the "background" film is in a broad sense "educative"; and in this pedagogical distinction lies the secret of the difference in function, as in quality, between the two. Many brilliant examples of the latter include documentary films, travelogues, films of civic activities, and of industrial processes, and vocational guidance films. Lastly there is the so-called "cultural" film, the main purpose of which is to illustrate the art of cinema. It has no place in the classroom at present, but is the special province of the research worker and individual enthusiast upon whose experiments, explorations and discoveries, the progress of cinema largely depends. For the school it is the "foreground" film that is of special importance, and in this class two particular types may be further distinguished according to their purpose,

namely, those films that are complete and coherent in themselves, and those that are merely auxiliary, a part of a greater whole, a fragment of a complete experience that they seek to illustrate at some particular point of complexity or difficulty.

THE ESSENCE IN ACTIVITY

Taking into account only those films that are complete and coherent in themselves, it has long been recognised that their special use in the classroom is to depict movement and to portray, in general, the dynamic aspect of things. No other instrument can rival the film in the performance of this task. Its very essence is activity, and this consideration alone limits the number of educational themes that are suited to this particular form of visual presentation. Only those subjects which have the quality of movement are adapted to the purpose of the film: and not such movement merely as is perceptible to the human eye or ear, but also those recurring activities that are made visible through the microscope or by time-lapse photography, as in the processes of plant life or in the movements of the chromosomes. Where there is no movement there is no function for the film. Much of pure mathematics, for example, is therefore ruled out as unsuitable material for filmic treatment, for the concepts are essentially static, and are better illustrated by the lantern slide. There is, however, one important branch of Pure Mathematics that is a notable exception. The Differential Calculus, as everybody knows, is primarily concerned with rate of change, which in itself implies motion. It is therefore highly suitable for film presentation, and, as Mr. A. D. Segaller has shown (*SIGHT & SOUND*, No. 23, p. 164), the film can explain the first principles of the Calculus more vividly and convincingly than is possible in the text-book. In the same way, with the coming of colour and the introduction of motion into three-dimensional drawings, the pupil may be enabled to grasp more easily the principles of solid geometry, and by means of stereoscopic cinema it may be possible to give, as has already been suggested, a method of presenting visually an equation containing four variables. Doubtless an interesting field for further research lies in the discovery and adaptation of subjects invested with intrinsic movement, where no movement is apparent or even suspected.

FIDELITY TO TRUTH

The vital quality of movement is common to all films but the educational film must have also the characteristic quality of accuracy, fidelity to truth down to the smallest detail. One "shot" in a correct reconstruction of, say, historical events may teach more in a minute or two than a teacher can accomplish in six months, the converse being equally true, and unfortunately more often applicable. It is therefore important that no wrong impression be created, and that no false information be given or even suggested. In the class-room the easy anachronisms of the entertainment or propaganda film are absolutely out of place. *Mary*

of *Scotland, Fire Over England*, and the many screen versions of Napoleon are not immune from this criticism, while much of the recent *Marie Walewska* is pure invention which, despite the admission in the foreword that the treatment in the film is the product of the dramatist's imagination, may have a seriously misleading influence on young impressionable minds. One has heard of the awful example of Tennyson's "Brook". As depicted by the poet it is a typical English stream, meandering through peaceful meadow and rich pasture lands in an atmosphere of quiet contentment and repose. Presented on the screen it becomes a roaring torrent descending in a series of gorgeous waterfalls, and mighty rapids from mountain heights that the poet's thought had never known. The educational film has an obligation to the truth of fiction as well as to the truth of fact, and the imagination no less than the intellect is entitled to respect.

THE "PERSONALITY" OF A PICTURE

But to conceive the film solely as a medium which records facts accurately or even vividly is to miss a quality that reveals its true genius. It does much more. It presents a living picture, and it should therefore have the quality of art that evokes the sense of life. In this way it exemplifies the distinction—but to a much greater degree—between the craft of the photographer and the art of the painter. The former is concerned with a verisimilitude that exists in appearance, in the outward form the latter with a verisimilitude that exists in reality, in the inward essence. The function of the film is the function of the artist. Like the artist, it seeks to invest its theme with a unity in continuity that induces a feeling of intimacy or "livingness" in such a way that the subject it presents springs immediately into life, and has a "personality" of its own. For this particular quality indeed the word "personality" seems the only adequate term. So we might speak of a geographical film in terms of the "personality" of the region that it depicts, in

so far as it calls into play the creative imagination of the trained geographer and the synthetic imagination of the true artist. Obviously such a film will be no mere sequence of geographical facts, however faithfully and vividly presented, but will be rather an artistic synthesis of selected dynamic aspects and basic movements that characterise the "life" of the region and give it its distinctive "personality". Familiar examples are to be seen in the distinctive rhythms, daily and seasonal, of different regions of the earth both in natural and human activities which give to them their particular character, and constitute the unity of their life.

THE HUMAN ELEMENT

In the classroom as elsewhere the human element is of supreme importance. Teachers are well aware that children learning to read are attracted first by the pictures of the "characters" whom they are to read about, and from the illustrations of the book they are led on to the discovery of the text. It is not otherwise with pictures that move. Man is the centre of the scene: the human situation is the beginning and the end. And even in films the purpose of which is mainly scenic or descriptive the human element is not to be ignored. Man in action against the force of circumstance or the force of nature, or the force of evil, is a theme that excites and enthral, and provides the form that gives unity to an otherwise unrelated succession of events, or detached series of recorded facts.

In the ideal film, no doubt, all these qualities would be present and many more. Even so, it is necessary to be reminded that "showing a film", like "telling a story", does not necessarily induce learning. Film lessons, like all lessons, if they are to be of value, must stimulate the pupils to mental activity, allowing them or rather impelling them to make their own inferences, and exercise their own intelligence. Thus they may be enabled to correct their impressions, to cultivate their feelings and taste, and to extend and enrich their human sympathies.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND FILMS

*The second of two articles by MR. ALEXANDER MACKAY,
Headmaster of Rockvilla School, Glasgow*

EARLY ENTHUSIASM for a newly-installed projector sometimes leads to an indiscriminating showing of films without any clearly defined instructional purpose. The cardinal principle of film education should never be neglected—that the film in the classroom is justified only when the film fulfils some teaching purpose that cannot be equally well served by any more readily available classroom aid. The film displaces the map, the picture, the epidiascope and the still projector only when the moving picture teaches more vividly and effectively than any of these. For example, to show *The Burns Country* by moving pictures is of very doubtful value, when the film can claim over picture postcards little advantage other than that trees sway in the breeze and that traffic moves in the village streets.

On the teacher rests the responsibility of deciding how, when and where to use films, and that implies that his opinion should have considerable influence on the vexed question of film supply. The academic specialist should be called into consultation to guarantee accuracy and relative emphasis, whilst the technical expert should determine

what can be properly and effectively shown upon the screen. The London experiment on the sound film and the recent conference of the Scottish Educational Film Association have brought the supply of satisfactory classroom films nearer by classifying them as (a) Expository or Lesson Films, (b) Illustrative Films, (c) Background Films and (d) Cultural Films.

The paradox of the Lesson Film is that it does not teach a lesson, nor at the primary school stage does any film. The teacher teaches the lesson, using the content of the film as his raw material, choosing what he requires in relation to the attainment standard of his class, and making only passing reference to any film sequence that is irrelevant for his immediate purpose.

In the primary school considerations of curriculum and time-table weight the scales heavily in favour of the five-minute Lesson Film, though, periodically, the fifteen-minute film will be of great value for illustrative or revision purposes. The chief requirement in any film for primary schools is that it should show a strongly marked unity.

Care should also be taken to avoid the fogging of the issue with too much detail, for at any juncture the teacher is concerned not with the whole truth, but only with selected parts of the truth.

Next to the strongly marked central theme, the primary school requires in its Lesson Films "straight" photography without self-conscious "art". The more elaborate types of advanced camera technique are out of place in the classroom. Neither the hawk's eye nor the worm's eye view is wanted, when either has been used merely for the sake of being different. Nor should sequences be introduced for their cinematic rather than their educational value.

We live in a picture age; but the picture houses have taught us to consume uncritically reel after reel of pictures, just as the daily press has habituated us to absorb unthinkingly yard upon yard of print. Especially for primary pupils we require in the Lesson Film "time to stand and stare." The breathless rush of the news-reel should be replaced in the Lesson Film by a measured repose, adequate to the needs even of the backward stream of pupils. Captions, brief and simple in wording, are very helpful in securing deliberation in attention, and should be inserted before any sequence that is not self-explanatory. The split caption should not be used; and the caption that aspires towards poetic prose is an abomination. Captions should not be used when the information given can be supplied with equal effect by the teacher during the follow-up lesson.

The subjects of the primary school that call for Lesson Films are English, history, geography, nature study and, to a more restricted extent, health, physical training and Scripture knowledge. Grading of films for narrowly limited age groups can be overdone. The moving pictures that appeal to the youngest class of infants are frequently effective also with the oldest age group of the primary school; it is the lesson in the spoken word that requires to be carefully graded. In Lesson Films for English, requirements are governed by the fact that almost any film lesson is a lesson in English; but English, in addition to films borrowed from other subjects, might ask for simple screen renderings of nursery tales, fairy tales, folk tales, animal stories, and lives of famous people in fact or fiction; all these to be faithful to tradition. At present, costs of production would seem to rule out moving picture history films; but some organisation should be set up to preserve and issue in a 16mm. edition for school use the educationally valuable portions of such pictures as *Henry VIII*, *Tudor Rose*, *Rhodes of Africa* with a view to building up film series to illustrate the life, manners and customs of a period. Geography and Nature study are even now well supplied; but in geography additional films are required of the teaching value of *Wheat Lands of East Anglia*, *Fruit Lands of Kent* and *The Regional Survey of N. W. Derbyshire*. On the "human" geography side, industrial films such as the Carrick Films on *Pottery*, *Baking* and *Making a Mirror* are very popular, for even the youngest pupils love to see the wheels go round and to be taught to what purpose they are moving. Nature study should, whenever possible, be at first hand; but teachers know that school visits can at the best be infrequent, and are often disappointing in results. Therefore the primary school requires, designed for itself, a greater supply of films on plant life like *The Green Plant* and *Roots*; on animal life like the *Grey Owl* films; on bird life like *The Green Plover*; on maritime life like *Birds of the Sea*; and on country life like the *Carrick Life on the Farm* films.

STRIPS AND SLIDES

IN THE Summer 1937 issue of SIGHT AND SOUND, an article on Film Strip and Film Slide Projection concluded with the promise of a list of apparatus and libraries. This promise it is only now possible to fulfil, as plans for new apparatus conforming to the new standards have but recently reached completion.

The list appended includes film-strip projectors (i.e. projectors of flexible strip) film-slide projectors (i.e. projectors of film bound between squares of glass) and various forms of adapter designed to enable film strips to be used on 16mm. projectors and standard slide-projectors.

Unless otherwise specified these projectors are designed for the standard film strip bearing pictures 24mm. × 36mm. ("Leica-size").

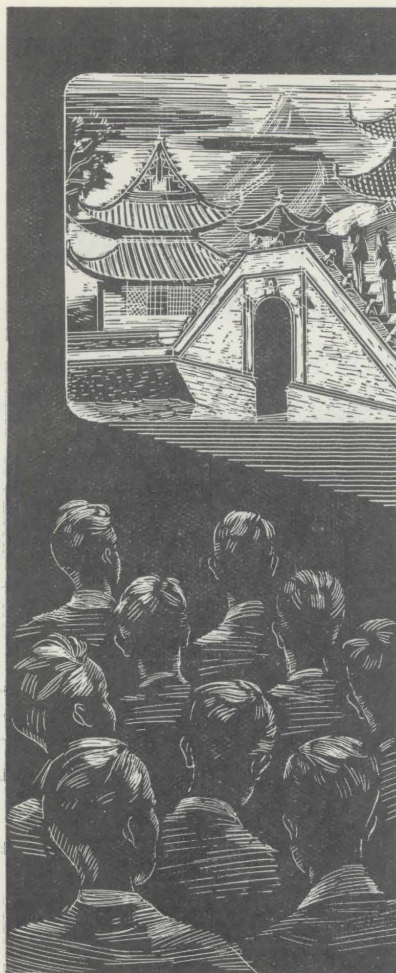
"& Slides" denotes that they can also take 2 in. × 2 in. glass slides.

"Micro-slides" denotes that they can also take microscope slides.

"28mm. × 40mm. also" denotes that provision has also been made for this larger sized film-image.

Agent	Type	Price	Remarks (size of frame projector, etc.)
Cinema Traders, 26 Church Street, London, W.1	"S" Lantern adapter	£ s. d. 6 17 6 8 17 6 2 19 6	24 × 18mm. 36 × 24mm.
Newton & Co., 43 Museum Street, London, W.C.1	"C" 1 "C" 3 "B" 1 "A" 1 "P" 1 "P" 2	4 10 0 6 10 0 9 9 0 10 10 0 14 14 0 16 16 0	24 × 18mm. 24 × 18mm. 24 × 18mm. 24 × 18mm. 24 × 18mm. 24 × 18mm. An adapter is required for showing 36 × 24mm.
Visual Information Service, 168a Battersea Bridge Rd., London, S.W.11	Standard 24/36	6 15 0 9 9 0	24 × 18mm. and Slides
W. Watson & Sons, 313 High Holborn, London, W.C.1		12 12 0	40 × 28mm. also & slides
Cinepro, 1 New Burlington St., London, W.1	16mm. projector adapter	7 0 0	and Slides
Neville Brown & Co., 44 Berners Street, London, W.1	Neokon 100 " 250 " 250/L	10 10 0 13 17 6 11 11 0	and slides and Slides and slides (for use with Leica lens only)
Pelly & Healey, 63 Blandford Street, London, W.1	" 250VB Adapter standard slide to short film-strip	23 1 0 10 6	and slides adapts stand- ard slide pro- jector to film- strips bearing four frames 36 × 24mm.

[continued overleaf]



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NEW BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE LEAFLET

The Film Institute Leaflet No. V, which contained advice on choosing a school projector, is now supplemented by a leaflet on "Using a School Projector". This opens with an introductory section explaining briefly what are the component parts of a silent projector and a sound projector and how they function. The second section covers preparation of the room and deals with darkening, position of projector and screen, electrical connections and acoustics. The third section gives advice on the normal running of a film show, how to meet various emergencies, and what steps to take regarding the care of projectors and films. The running of loop films is also described. Section four gives a list of the libraries from which films suitable for use in schools may be obtained. It is hoped that this leaflet will not only assist schools in meeting the various problems which may arise after the purchase of a projector, but will also be found useful as a manual of projection practice by organisers of refresher courses for teachers. The price is 1s. 2d. post free.

TECHNICAL ARTICLES

The papers containing the articles mentioned below may be seen at the Institute's premises by arrangement.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Twenty Years of Development of High Frequency Cameras by H. E. A. Joachim (*S.M.P.E. Journal, February*).

High-Speed Motion Picture Photography Applied to Design of Telephone Apparatus; W. Herriott (*S.M.P.E. Journal, January*).

Straightening Out Our "Depths"; F. G. Beach (*Movie Makers, March*).

A Micrographic Movie Machine; John Maurer (*Movie Makers, March*).

Snow Time Scenes; Sidney A. Diamond (*Movie Makers, February*).

Lighting de Luxe; Edward W. A. Seward (*Movie Makers, January*).

PROJECTION

Screen-image Dimensions; F. H. Richardson (*S.M.P.E. Journal, March*).

PROCESSING

Modulated High-frequency Recording as a Means of Determining Conditions of Optical Processing; J. O. Baker and D. H. Robinson (*S.M.P.E. Journal, January*).

RECORDING

Stereophonic Recording; J. P. Maxfield (*S.M.P.E. Journal, February*).

Push-Pull Recording; J. K. Hilliard (*S.M.P.E. Journal, February*).

MISCELLANEOUS

Revision of S.M.P.E. Standards (*S.M.P.E. Journal, March*).

Report of the Committee on Preservation of Film (*S.M.P.E. Journal, March*).

Recent Developments in Gaseous Discharge Lamps; S. Dushman (*S.M.P.E. Journal, January*).

A NEW FILM OF BRISTOL

The Bristol Development Board has had a new two-reel film made, entitled *Bristol—City of a Thousand Years*. The producers are Messrs. F. G. Warne Ltd., of Bristol. The film is concerned with the historic and scenic attractions of the city, and can be borrowed free of charge in 16mm. and 9mm. sizes, from the Bristol Development Board, 1 Bristol Bridge, Bristol, 1.

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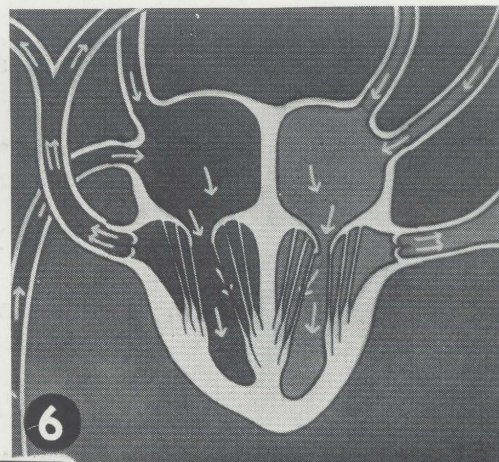
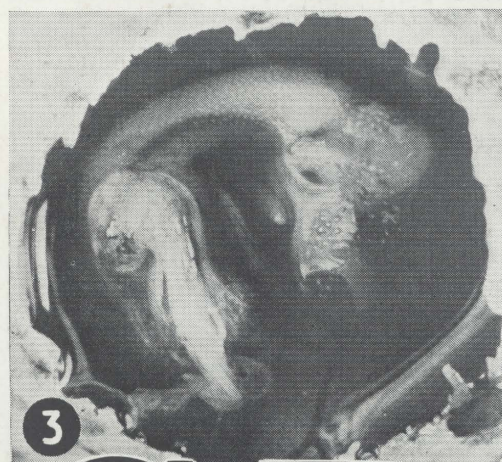
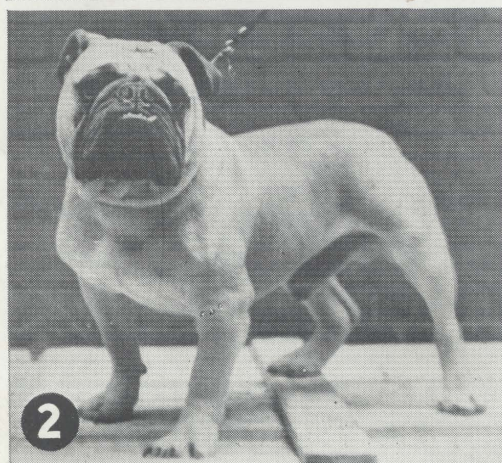
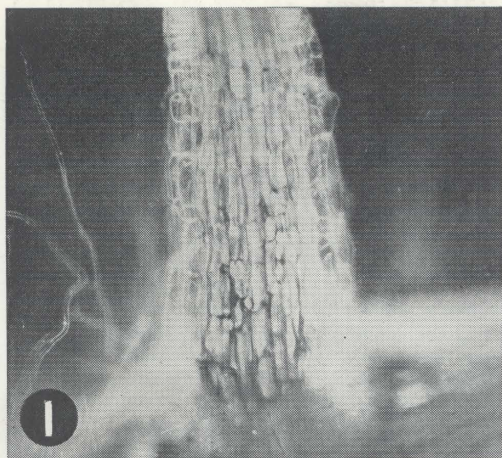
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